

The Woman's College of  
The University of North Carolina  
LIBRARY



CQ  
no. 492

COLLEGE COLLECTION

Gift of  
Thomas Lane Moore, III

MOORE-THOMAS LANE, III: The Mississippi Democratic Primary of July, 1946: A Case Study. (1967) Directed by: Dr. Richard Bardolph. pp. 99.

The thesis illustrates the extreme hostility to the possibility of any change in the status quo of race relations that manifested itself in the Mississippi Democratic primary of 1946. It focuses primarily on the Senatorial campaign of that contest in which Theodore G. Bilbo successfully used the race issue (in spite of the attempt of each of his opponents to assure the electorate that he could best defend "white supremacy") to obtain his reelection. It points out that editorial comments from all sections of the state, while often hostile to Bilbo, were in favor of the preservation of the existing racial conditions in Mississippi. It shows that Negroes who attempted to register and vote in Mississippi often had to run a gauntlet of extra-legal intimidation if they stood fast to their purpose.

The last section of the thesis points out that the senatorial campaign and the subsequent Senate investigation of the methods used by Bilbo to win the election convinced some Northerners that much would have to be done in Mississippi if Negro citizens of that state were going to be able to enjoy the rights that the federal courts said they were entitled to.

THE MISSISSIPPI DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY  
OF JULY, 1946: A CASE STUDY

by

Thomas Lane Moore, III

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in History

Greensboro  
January, 1966

Approved by

Richard B. Borden  
Director

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following  
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis  
Director

Richard B. Baskin

Oral Examination  
Committee Members

James S. Ferguson  
Richard N. Quirent  
Robert W. Stephens  
Richard Baskin

January 27, 1967  
Date of Examination



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	1
II. THEODORE BILBO AND THE SENATORIAL CONTEST . . . . .	13
III. PATTERNS OF DISFRANCHISEMENT . . . . .	51
IV. NATIONAL OPINION AND THE MISSISSIPPI PRIMARY . . . . .	78
V. CONCLUSION . . . . .	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	90

## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This study is focused upon a primary election in the State of Mississippi, held on July 2, 1946. The selection of this particular contest was influenced by several considerations. In the first place, it was the first election to be held in Mississippi after the Supreme Court of the United States had, in Smith v. Allwright (1944), struck down the "white primary" (one of the South's favorite devices for eliminating Negroes from effective participation in the electoral process) as an unconstitutional denial of the Negro's right to vote. Second, the campaign of Theodore Bilbo for the Democratic nomination to succeed himself as United States senator from Mississippi offers a vivid--perhaps the worst--example of demagogic electioneering in which race-baiting was the principal element. Third, it illustrates the degree to which a deep-South state's officialdom and much of its rank-and-file population shared racist views that found expression in a resourceful, if strident, campaigner. Fourth, it drew the nation's attention to the gap between the constitutional legal rights of Negroes and the actual implementation of those rights, and thereby helped to create sympathy for the Negro's cause. Finally, it strengthened

the Negro's own determination to claim the privilege that the law of the land guaranteed him.

The election emphasized, in short, once more the distance that separated Northerners from Southerners in their respective views of the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and its great affirmation that "all men are created equal." This is not to deny that Northerners were capable of the same mentality when Negroes began moving in considerable numbers into Northern neighborhoods. The difference in 1946 was, nevertheless, very significant. Indeed, the differences on this point had, of course, long been a source of strain between the sections. Not only were Northerners dismayed by the inferior status to which Southern institutions and laws consigned the Negro; Southerners were no less dismayed by Northern attempts--which they felt would destroy their Southern civilization--to raise the Negro status in law and in fact.

By 1820 the United States had split into two sections: the North, which believed that the institution of Negro slavery and the Declaration of Independence were incompatible; and the South, which believed that slavery was protected by the Constitution and that the Declaration of Independence had referred only to white men. The ideological dispute between the sections was finally settled on the battlefield. The North, however, did not honestly act upon the idea that the Negro was entitled

to the equal rights of the white man, for by 1876 that region had allowed the Southern whites to regain effective control of all the former states of the Confederacy. The next twenty-five years witnessed an increasing use of fraud and intimidation by Southern whites to disfranchise the Negro, followed by a successful movement throughout the South to disfranchise him by law. During this quarter century the Northern section of the United States was in general agreement with the South on the proposition that all races were not created equal. The North, in fact, led the crusade to take up the "white man's burden" by acquiring some of Spain's colonial possessions--and with these possessions the "inferior" Filipino race.

Until 1930 the idea of the inferiority of the Negro race was a part of the intellectual climate of America,<sup>1</sup> but by this date the findings of science had made this idea increasingly difficult to defend rationally. The extreme racial doctrines of Nazi Germany, moreover, caused a reaction that placed all racists in a bad light.<sup>2</sup> By

---

<sup>1</sup>Idus A. Newby, Jim Crow's Defense (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Newsweek made the following statement about Bilbo's filibuster against the Fair Employment Practices Commission: "It was not because of what the senior Senator from Mississippi, Theodore G. Bilbo, had to say, but his timing. He had chosen the aftermath of war against the Nazis to invoke mob invective against 'dagoes' and 'kikes' who urged equal opportunity for the American Negro ('Mississippi Mud,' Newsweek, August 6, 1945, p. 39).

1946, consequently, the Northerners had moved to the position that the Negro was being illegally denied his rights in the South.

.....

Negro suffrage in Mississippi has varied directly with the ebb and flow of Northern opinion about what rights the Negro should have. Before the Civil War most of the Negroes in Mississippi were slaves. Those who were not were often prohibited from living in certain areas and were almost always denied the right to vote. The government set up under the Congressional plan of Reconstruction granted the franchise to almost all of the male adult Negroes who resided in Mississippi, and for about seven years the Negro played an important role in the government of the state.

The Reconstruction government in Mississippi proved to be one of the best Reconstruction governments in the South. It assumed many new responsibilities, many of which were kept by the "Redeemers" who succeeded the Reconstruction regime. Negro office-holding during this period was never predominant, and relatively little corruption was ever proved to have existed.<sup>3</sup> In 1876 the white Democrats regained control of the state from the Republicans. For the next fourteen years the Republican party remained

---

<sup>3</sup>Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (Vol. XXVIII of the James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 179.



somewhat of a threat to the Democrats. The latter, however, as the white man's party, were able to prevent the Republicans from recapturing control--by the use of fraud, intimidation, and the cry of "white supremacy."<sup>4</sup>

What some white Mississippians think happened from 1865 to 1890 is as important in explaining their feelings about Negro suffrage as what actually did happen. On December 5, 1946, the following dialogue occurred between Senator Theodore G. Bilbo and Senator Burnet R. Maybank of South Carolina:

Senator Maybank. You mentioned a while ago that during the reconstruction days--I have forgotten the exact number of years--in Mississippi the entire government was colored.

Senator Bilbo. Oh, yes. Yes.

Senator Maybank. How many years was that?

Senator Bilbo. Let us see. The amendments to the Constitution, XIV and XV, were adopted in 1867 or thereabouts. I would say about 16 years, 20 years of nigger control. We never got rid of them until 1890 when we adopted the Constitution of Mississippi, which restored the white control in the state.

Senator Maybank. Well, is it not a fact that from the memory of those days, passed on by those who lived in those days to the present generation of Mississippians, all of whom practically are born here as you have said--

Senator Bilbo. Yes.

Senator Maybank. Is it to that fact that this

---

<sup>4</sup>Albert Dennis Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), pp. 3-57.

determination to keep the Negro out of the Democratic primary is largely due and not to the utterances of any one man or group of men?

Senator Bilbo. The historical facts are known by the younger generation and a number of the older people of this State, of what reconstruction meant as to what Negro control would mean, which is the one thing that makes us all a unit in seeing to it that we do have white control.<sup>5</sup>

In 1890 a constitutional convention met in Jackson for the avowed purpose of drawing up a constitution that would effectively disfranchise the Negro.<sup>6</sup> Despite this constitution many Negroes still continued to qualify to vote,<sup>7</sup> until, on July 22, 1903, almost all Negroes were eliminated from the electoral process by the adoption of a white-only rule for participants in the newly adopted Democratic primary, a measure created by the State Democratic

---

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearing before the Special Committee to Investigate Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, on S.244, Dec. 2-5, 79th Congress 2d session, 1947, p. 356 (hereafter referred to as Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing).

<sup>6</sup>C[omer] Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), p. 321.

<sup>7</sup>Although the Constitution of 1890, by its literacy clause, removed the possibility of the Negro majority from ever becoming an important force in Mississippi politics, Kirwan points out that Negroes a decade after the adoption of the Constitution of 1890 were playing the same role in Mississippi elections that they had been playing in the several years preceding the adoption of the Constitution (Kirwan, p. 131).

Sometimes, however, circuit clerks allowed certain Negroes to vote in order to use the votes to keep the small political cliques, of which the clerks were members, in office.

Executive Committee.<sup>8</sup> This ruling lasted from 1903 until 1944, when it was by inference declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Smith v. Allwright.

Although the Negro was thus eliminated from the Mississippi electoral process, his presence in Mississippi still had an important effect on Mississippi elections. Many candidates running for office in Democratic primaries--for all practical purposes the actual election in Mississippi--made their stand on the race question an integral part of their platforms. Any candidate for a Mississippi office who could convince the electorate that his opponent took a position, or was inclined to a position, on Negro rights that was not in harmony with Mississippi's social mores could effectively defeat his opponent. Often the ability to convince the electorate that his opponent would not be as "strong" on the Negro question as he was would be enough to insure the latter's success.

The importance of the race question in Mississippi

---

<sup>8</sup>It seems ironic that the constitution that had been intended to disfranchise the Negro resulted in disfranchising even more whites; and the electoral reform, the primary, which placed the selection of officials in the hands of the majority of the electorate, disfranchised almost all Negroes from the real electoral process. This ironic fact, however, conforms to Woodward's statement that "an increase of Jim Crow laws upon the statute books of a state is almost an accurate index of the decline of the reactionary regimes of the Redeemers and the triumph of the white democratic movement" (Newby, Jim Crow's Defense, p. 211, as cited in Woodward's Origins of the New South).

politics depended to a great extent upon the Northern position on the issue. In the early years of the century, the Negro issue was not paramount.<sup>9</sup> As Northern opinion changed, however, to the position that existing racial conditions in Mississippi should be changed, the ability of a candidate to convince the electorate that he was best able to protect the status quo in racial relations became increasingly crucial.

.....

The change in Northern attitudes toward the rights of Negroes to participate in the electoral process in the South was reflected in certain United States Supreme Court decisions. In 1896 the Supreme Court held that it had no concern with whether the purpose of the Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890 was to disfranchise citizens of the colored race "unless the purpose is executed by the constitution or laws or by those who administer them."<sup>10</sup> No case relating to the exclusion of Negroes from Democratic primaries arose until the state legislature of Texas (probably encouraged by the case of Newberry v. United States, which had declared that

---

<sup>9</sup>Men who used the race issue in their campaigns at a time when the nation was in general agreement with the South about the race problem were James K. Vardaman and Vardaman's contemporary and sometimes political opponent, John Sharp Williams, who always let the electorate know that he stood "right" of the race question.

<sup>10</sup>William v. Mississippi, 170 U.S. 213 (1898).



primaries are not elections but ". . . merely methods by which party adherents agree upon candidates whom they intend to offer and support for ultimate choice by all qualified electors"<sup>11</sup>) passed a law in 1923 that prohibited Negroes from participating in the Democratic primary. In 1926 this law was ruled unconstitutional by a Supreme Court decision which declared that:

. . . States may do a good deal of classifying that it is difficult to believe rational, but there are limits, and it is too clear for extended argument that color cannot be made the basis of a statutory classification affecting the right set up in this case.<sup>12</sup>

This Supreme Court decision was accepted, even in Texas, as one that was justified by the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>13</sup> Soon thereafter the Texas legislature placed in the hands of the State Democratic Executive Committee the power to decide who could vote in a Democratic primary, and that committee promptly responded by prohibiting Negroes from participating in such contests. In 1931 the Supreme Court found this act to be unconstitutional because the Court felt that "whatever inherent power a state political party has to determine the qualifications of its members resides

---

<sup>11</sup>Newberry v. United States, 256 U.S. 232 (1920).

<sup>12</sup>Nixon v. Herndon, 273 U.S. 536 (1927).

<sup>13</sup>"The Negro's Right to be a Democrat," Literary Digest, XCII (March 19, 1927), p. 10.



in the party convention and not in any committee."<sup>14</sup> The Texas legislature thereupon followed the advice of the Supreme Court and repealed all such laws concerning primaries. The Supreme Court then found in Grove v. Townsend (1935) that the exclusion of Negroes from Democratic primaries, when the exclusion was not a result of state laws, did not violate the federal Constitution.<sup>15</sup> By 1935 Northern opinion had changed to such an extent that there was hostile criticism of the decision in many publications of the North and even in a portion of the press of the upper South.<sup>16</sup>

In 1940 the Supreme Court in the case of United States v. Classic, an action that was not concerned with Negro suffrage at all, declared that:

. . . Where the state law has made the primary election an integral part of the procedure of choosing Representatives, or where in fact the

---

<sup>14</sup>Nixon v. Condon, 286 U.S. 73 (1932).

<sup>15</sup>Grove v. Townsend, 295 U.S. 45 (1935).

This opinion was based on many existing practices--such as the candidates' paying for the expenses of the primary--that prevailed in Texas but not in Mississippi. One scholar felt that the decision, if applied to Mississippi conditions, would have made the exclusion of Negroes from the Mississippi Democratic primary unconstitutional (O. Douglas Weeks, "The White Primary," Mississippi Law Review, VIII [December 1935], p. 140).

<sup>16</sup>"Negro Primary Vote Barred," Literary Digest, CXIX (April 13, 1935), p. 10; "Should Negroes Vote?" New Republic LXXXIII (May 8, 1935), p. 356; "Black Justice," Nation, CXL (May 1, 1935), p. 497.

primary effectively controls the choice, the right of a qualified elector to vote and have his ballot counted at the primary is part of the right to choose Representatives secured by Art. 1 & 2 [of the Constitution].<sup>17</sup>

The Supreme Court used the same line of reasoning in 1944 in Smith v. Allwright when it declared that:

. . . If the State requires a certain electoral procedure, prescribes a general election ballot made up of party nominees so chosen and limits the choice of the electorate in general elections for state office, practically speaking, to those whose names appear on such a ballot, it adopts, it endorses, and enforces the discrimination against Negroes practiced by a party entrusted by Texas law with the determination of the qualification of participants in the primary.

The privilege of membership in a party may be, as this court said in Grovey v. Townsend, 295 U.S. 45, 55, no concern of a State. But when, as here the privilege is also the essential qualification for a general election, the State makes the action of the party the action of the State.<sup>18</sup>

Smith v. Allwright was just one of the numerous manifestations of the nation's growing disapproval of the inferior position to which white-controlled Southern society had relegated its Negro members--and also of Northern attempts to improve the Negro's position. Other manifestations of this Northern disposition, of which Southerners were more aware, were the Fair Employment Practices Commission; the activities of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt; the editorial policies of many Northern periodicals such as

---

<sup>17</sup>United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 299 (1940).

<sup>18</sup>Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 649 (1944).

Life, Newsweek, Time, Collier's, the Nation, and the New Republic; and the newspaper columns of Walter Winchell and Drew Pearson. In various parts of the South speeches made by politicians, as well as election results, showed that the South was hostile to the Northern attempts to change Southern society.<sup>19</sup> One of the most extreme manifestations of Southern hostility to Northern attempts to change Southern ways came in the Mississippi Democratic primary election of July 2, 1946.

---

<sup>19</sup>For example, Eugene Talmadge won the governor's election in Georgia on a "white supremacy" ticket, and even Claude Pepper, a liberal senator from Florida, made statements that were intended to satisfy the racial prejudices of his constituents.

## CHAPTER II

### THEODORE BILBO AND THE SENATORIAL CONTEST

The particular contest in this 1946 election in which Mississippi's resentment was most clearly manifested was the senatorial race in which Theodore G. Bilbo, Tom Q. Ellis, Ross A. Collins, and Nelson T. Levings campaigned for the seat currently occupied by Theodore G. Bilbo.<sup>1</sup> The campaigns of all of these candidates show beyond dispute that none of them felt that there was anything wrong with the subordinate position of the Negro in Mississippi society, and three of the rivals made it clear that they were in favor of preventing Negroes from voting in the first Democratic primary in Mississippi that occurred after the Smith v. Allwright decision.

Bilbo conducted his campaign on the premise that he was fighting to save Mississippi's way of life and that, as a result, he was suffering persecution. He announced

---

<sup>1</sup>Officially, Frank ("Peachtree") Harper was also a candidate. The former state senator, however, was never really considered in the running. He waged his campaign, which included no scheduled appearances, by speaking to voters while hitchhiking around the state (Clarksdale Register, June 10, 1946, p. 1). He did, however, have the editorial support of the Grenada County News, whose editor gleefully wrote on July 4 that "the editor's reputation for never being on the winning side is still unshaken and unshakable" (Grenada County News, June 6, 1946, p. 4; July 4, 1946, p. 1).



that when he had gone to Washington in 1935, he found there lobbies "for Communism, Socialism, and various other pressure groups." He, however, "chose to fight for the American way of life, white supremacy, and the freedom of the people and as a result" he had been "reviled in certain newspapers and magazines and in [his] home office [had] been picketed by the scum of the earth."<sup>2</sup> Since Bilbo was being pilloried

---

<sup>2</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 6, 1946, p. 1; Magnolia Gazette, June 20, 1946, p. 1.

Other examples of this premise are the following advertisements for Bilbo and statements made by him:

"EVERYBODY KNOWS WE'RE IN THE MIDST OF A TORNADO NOW, BUT WHO SAW IT BREWING---BILBO.

"Bilbo may stand alone, but he stands between the South and the revolution of isms, the pressure groups and the small minorities who are never wrong and whose sole aim is to Rule or Ruin.

"ANYBODY can attend the 'tea parties' given by the socialites and lobbyists and be 'mildly popular' or at least 'not in the way' in Washington. But Bilbo does not care for Washington popularity as much as he does the IDEAS OF HIS OWN NATIVE SOUTH and he speaks those views in no uncertain terms. He fights for his views with all the strength at his command, whether they be popular or not. He has proven he will not only fight alone, but that he can fight successfully for the protection of our American dual system of Government and for the customs, ideals, and white supremacy of the South" (Jackson Daily News, June 23, 1946, p. 8).

"Because of my stand on the floor of the United States Senate the National questions which now make it possible for the white Democrats to vote, I have been boycotted, picketed, and condemned by many of the leading newspapers, journals, commentators and other organs of the North and East as well as by my colleagues in the Senate, and although at times I have met strong opposition and have been subject to much criticism, I realized that the needs and wishes of my people call for the stand which I have taken and the effort put forth to the very best of my ability in the behalf of the needs of our State" (Daily Herald [Biloxi], June 7, 1946, p. 10).



because of his successful opposition to measures advocated by the adherents of anti-Southernism, it was necessary for the native white Mississippians to confound these "Communist, Socialist, and various other pressure groups" by reelecting Bilbo, the "champion of Southern customs and Southern ideals," to a third term in the United States Senate.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>The following political advertisements for Bilbo, as well as his own statements, illustrate this premise well:

"No intimation is made directly or indirectly that the four Mississippi opponents of Senator Bilbo are Communist or Socialist or advocates of racial social equality, but it is a well-known fact throughout the Nation that all of the Communists, Socialists and advocates of racial social equality are against Senator Bilbo and every vote cast against Senator Bilbo will lend encouragement to the Communists, Socialists, and advocates of racial social equality throughout the nation.

"The supporters of the FEPC, THE CIO AND ITS POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE and the ADVOCATES OF RACIAL SOCIAL EQUALITY have made the boast that they will use such money and propaganda as may be necessary to defeat Senator Bilbo because he has had the ability and the courage to stand up and fight for the traditions and the ideals of the South and Mississippi. Every vote cast against Senator Bilbo will encourage the supporters of the FEPC and CIO and its POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE and the ADVOCATES OF RACIAL SOCIAL EQUALITY, and every vote cast for Senator Bilbo will discourage all such from making further efforts to destroy the institutions and ideals of the white Democrats of Mississippi" (Hattiesburg American, June 29, 1946, p. 6).

"TO THE WHITE DEMOCRATIC VOTER: If 'The Man' Bilbo is not a great power in the United States Senate, why should several National Weekly publications all turn their 'guns' on the Senator the last week prior to the election to be held tomorrow? Some misguided folks say: 'Let sleeping dogs lie.' But Senator Bilbo fought in the Senate the very thing these National Weekly publications are anxious to cram down the throats of the people of the South. That's why they are trying to dictate to Free Born Mississippians. Why they believe they can concentrate their 'guns' on Senator Bilbo

Bilbo explained the grave dangers that faced white Mississippians and called for drastic measures. He informed the electorate that his two opponents, Ross A. Collins and Nelson T. Levings, were mistaken when they said there was

---

in one desperate avalanche of printers ink and thus slay him politically on the theory that their foul pens are mightier than the sword. But they forget the simple fact that white Democratic voters of the great State of Mississippi resent with all their minds, hearts, and souls the efforts of outsiders undertaking to dictate to them how they should vote in their own state elections. Voters, let us answer this preposterous presumption by reelecting Senator Bilbo in the First Primary (Laurel Leader Call, July 1, 1946, p. 10).

"DON'T BE FOLLED BY LAST MINUTE LIES

"1. Mrs. Roosevelt and her social equality gang, her Eleanor Clubs.

"2. James Roosevelt and his subversive un-American organization.

"3. Walter Winchell and his under-cover backers, egotistic, crazy nut.

"4. Drew Pearson, the paid political liar, his backers, branded as a liar by two Presidents and many others.

"5. The Communist subversive elements of the North and East, who fear him.

"6. Those elements everywhere who would finish ruining the Democratic Party.

"7. To defeat him at this time would be misunderstood as our endorsement of those who seek his defeat from outside the State.

"8. We agree with him on principle, although we may differ with him on his methods, manners, or tactics. So why not vote on principles?

"It seems to me there is no choice for the people of Mississippi this year but to re-elect Senator Bilbo. Any other course would be misconstrued by the country" (Quitman County Democrat, June 27, 1946, p. 5).

"My Friends in Mississippi know that this Senatorial race isn't an ordinary race.' He [Bilbo] declared, 'It is not the candidacy of Bilbo versus four opponents, but it is the candidacy of Bilbo plus the people of Mississippi against Communism, Socialism and all the other isms that would destroy our white man's government in the South.'" (Jackson Daily News, June 26, 1946, II, p. 8).

no race question in the senatorial campaign because there was a very grave race problem--one he feared might lead "our white civilization to bankruptcy."<sup>4</sup> He declared that Negro leaders were planning meetings in Jackson to plan an invasion of the "white Democratic primary" and warned them that Mississippi faced a situation similar to the Reconstruction days when Negroes held public office in the state. "It cannot and must not happen again,"<sup>5</sup> he emphasized, adding that "as a result of this action [by the Progressive Voters League] white Mississippians were living on a volcano that might erupt at any hour" and that this action was "one of the most destructive drives on against the principles of the South that we have known since the Carpetbagger days of the Civil War."<sup>6</sup> The

---

<sup>4</sup>Conservative [Carrolton], May 10, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>McComb Enterprise Journal, May 21, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], May 21, 1946, p. 3.

Probably the reason that Bilbo used the term "one of" was that he also referred to the attempt of the Political Action Committee of the Congress of Industrial Organization to defeat ten senators and twenty-three representatives as "one of the most damnable and destructive drives against our Southern way of Life since the Carpetbagger days of the Civil War" (Okolona Messenger, May 23, 1946, p. 1).

Bilbo did say, "The CIO's avowed aim of the franchise for the Negro in Mississippi, which they will buy in order to break the white man's government, may well prove [to be] the most significant political event in the history of the State" (Clarion Ledger [Jackson], May 26, 1946, p. 2).

The senior senator referred to the CIO's PAC, whose visible activity in the Mississippi Democratic primary election of 1946 was to announce that they were opposed to

"Stormy Petrel" of Mississippi politics told his audience that the leader or leaders of this group of "politically ambitious Negroes" who were challenging the right of anyone to prevent them from voting in the Democratic primary "should be atomically bombed and exterminated from the face of the earth" and "anyone caught in the act of Negro-organizing, Communist-supporting, race-antagonizing acts should be horse-whipped, tarred and feathered and chased out of our beloved Southland."<sup>7</sup>

Bilbo explained that these advocates of Negro suffrage:

. . . mostly Northern-sponsored by Communist tendencies, care nothing for the Negroes except to use his ballot for their own selfish purpose and that purpose is to buy the vote of the Negro race as one bloc--just like a bunch of sheep. . . . [By this method] their overall plan to wreck our scheme of government and take over control of our economic, social, and cultural well-being in the Southland would be complete.<sup>8</sup>

---

the reelection of Bilbo and Representative John Rankin of Mississippi, as "this giant octopus which extends its nasty, slimy arms out into the most remote hamlets of our beloved country." He also referred to the CIO-PAC's chairman, Sidney Hillman, as a "Russian-born Communist of the lowest ilk ever to enter this country" (Okolona Messenger, May 23, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>7</sup>Jackson Daily News, May 20, 1946, p. 2. Bilbo denied on December 5, 1946, that he had ever made this statement that the Jackson Daily News had quoted him as saying (Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing, p. 348).

<sup>8</sup>Clark County Tribune, June 21, 1946.

In Magnolia Bilbo explained that "there are between 5 and 10 million people in this country who call themselves



Bilbo made his campaign a crusade to preserve the "purity" of the "white Democratic primary." The allowing of eighty Negroes to vote in a municipal election at Pass Christian he denounced as "one of the most damnable demonstrations of demagoguery in our Southland."<sup>9</sup> He asked that his senatorial opponents:

. . . promptly join through the public press in a request to the Negroes to refrain from any attempt to participate in our white Democratic nominating primary of July 2, and that you also join me and the other white people in every effort to prevent the first steps under the leadership of Northern Negroes, white Socialists, white Communists, and white advocates of social and political equality to destroy white control and white supremacy in the State of Mississippi.<sup>10</sup>

The senator declared that:

. . . Any white man running for public office who straddles, dodges, equivocates or otherwise encourages the Negro vote during a white Democratic primary should be barred from participating in a white Democratic primary election.<sup>11</sup>

Negro voting in the "white Democratic-nominating primary," he explained, was illegal for several reasons.

---

Americans, but who are trying to undermine American policies by breaking down state lines so that the people of the Nation might be ruled by communistic bureaus in Washington" (Magnolia Gazette, June 20, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>9</sup>Daily Herald [Biloxi], June 6, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Investigation of Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Report pursuant to S. 224, Report No. 1, p. 14 [hereafter referred to as Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Report].

<sup>11</sup>Natchez Democrat, June 18, 1946, p. 5.



Section 244 of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890 "required that before anyone can register, he must be able to read, or explain after it is read to him or her, the provisions of the Constitution." It was impossible for a Negro to do this because "the Mississippi Constitution is written so that very few white people and no Negroes can understand it."<sup>12</sup> He declared that:

. . . The circuit clerks are under oath to protect the provisions of that Constitution and if there is a single man or woman serving in that important office who cannot think up questions enough to disqualify "undesirables" then write Bilbo or any good lawyer and there are a hundred good questions which can be furnished.<sup>13</sup>

Those Negroes who managed to qualify in spite of Section 244 of the Constitution of 1890, Bilbo pointed out, still were not qualified to vote in the "white Democratic primary" because of a Mississippi law that required that "every voter must have been in harmony with the Democratic party and its objectives for the past two years."<sup>14</sup> He also explained that "it has taken us [the white race] 6000 years to get where we are qualified. How can you expect the Negroes to be qualified in 150 [years]?"<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Jackson Daily News, May 26, 1946, p. 1; Tupelo Daily Journal, May 18, 1946, p. 6; Webster's Progress [Euporia], May 30, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup>Clarion Ledger, May 28, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Natchez Democrat, June 29, 1946, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Daily Herald [Biloxi], July 1, 1946, p. 4.

The Senator openly encouraged the white Mississippians to prevent the Negro from "illegally" voting:

If you let a handful go to the polls on July 2, there will be two handfuls in 1947, and from then on it will grow into a mighty surge. The white people of Mississippi can't afford to let this happen in a state where half of the population is Negro.<sup>16</sup>

He encouraged his listeners to support the officials and to use "whatever means [are] in your command to preserve and protect the customs in the Southern white Democratic primary."<sup>17</sup> If the election official should fail to challenge the Negro voter, then white bystanders should do so; the election official should then put the ballot in an envelope, and it would be possible to see how the Negro voted, and later the Democratic Executive Committee could decide whether the Negro was qualified.<sup>18</sup> He elaborated:

. . . I don't say go to violence but go to any extremes that are justified, and if you don't know what I mean you are just plain dumb. But remember the best way to keep the Negro from voting is to see him the night before.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 23, 1946, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 28, 1946, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Laurel Leader Call, June 28, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>Clarion Ledger, June 30, 1946, p. 1.

Senator Bilbo explained during the investigation of the charge that he had intimidated Negro voters that "by all statements I made to the effect that the best way to keep the Negro from voting was to see him the night before, I simply meant for 56 years no Negro had participated in the Democratic primaries in Mississippi; that because of these outside

The Senator called upon:

. . . every red-blooded Anglo-Saxon man in Mississippi to resort to any means to keep hundreds of Negroes from the polls in the July 2 primary. And if you don't know what this means, you are not up on your persuasive measures.<sup>20</sup>

---

influences, which I have already referred to, many Negroes were registering or attempting to register, and apparently intended to vote in the primary; that if the Negro attempted to participate in the primary there would likely be violence, bloodshed and other unlawful acts by irresponsible persons not identified with the better citizenship of Mississippi, nor with my campaign . . . . Therefore, if they were called on the night before, and it was explained to them that they were not entitled to vote by the right sort of citizens, I felt they would abandon this unlawful purpose; whereas, if not so advised and they appeared at the polls, acts by irresponsible persons might occur. It was my purpose to prevent any such occurrences in order to protect the people as well as the white primary system of Mississippi (Senatorial Investigating Committee, 1946, Report, p. 342).

<sup>20</sup>New York Times, June 23, 1946, p. 30. Bilbo said this about a Time article that had quoted him as saying substantially the same thing: "Let me call your attention to the last paragraph of Time . . . . 'I call on every red-blooded white man to use any means'--any lawful means, any means within the law. They are trying to destroy me, that is what they were trying to do, because I was a United States Senator. If I was going to go out here and tell the people to use shotguns and use anything in the world to keep the nigger from voting, I would be subject to impeachment or dismissal. I didn't say that" (Senatorial Investigating Committee, 1946, Hearing, p. 349).

One of the main points upon which the majority report, recommending that Senator Bilbo be seated, and the minority report, recommending that he not be seated, differed was in the interpretation that they gave to the question of whether Bilbo had said "any means." The majority report declared that "Senator Bilbo categorically denied ever making such a statement. At the hearing he insisted that he always used the adjective 'lawful' means . . . . On the record of conflicting accounts, the majority concluded that he used the word 'lawful' and that if one [on] some occasions he neglected to use the adjective as alleged by some witnesses, it was due to a slip of the tongue." The minority report "found as a fact, that Senator Bilbo in his extemporaneous stump advocacy preceding the July 2, 1946, primary election

Bilbo explained that the federal government could not stop white Mississippians from barring Negroes from the polls during the July 2 Democratic primary because Mississippians would compose the grand jury and the trial jury that would try the accused Mississippi officials or citizens.<sup>21</sup> He defied "Tom Clark [United States Attorney General], the Department of Justice, and the F.B.I. [Federal Bureau of Investigation] to try to keep the white people of this state from running the white Democratic primary as we think it should be run."<sup>22</sup>

He also presented the voters with a long-range plan to solve the racial problems caused by "so-called Southern liberal and Socialistic, Communistic political gangsters

---

in Mississippi advocated the use of any means to prevent Negroes from registering or voting therein as distinct from confinement of the phrase to 'any lawful means.' We base this finding upon unanimous reports as contained in newspapers throughout Mississippi and the nation, which reports in many cases were written by correspondents who personally attended his campaign and which, without exception, uniformly reported the speeches of Senator Bilbo as including the statement 'by any means' as distinct from 'by any lawful means'" (Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Report, pp. 9, 15).

<sup>21</sup>Daily Corinthian, June 25, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 25, 1946, p. 1.

Senator Bilbo did not mention the possibility that he might be judged by his fellow senators for advocating the denial of the vote to Negroes. The threat of a senatorial probe had developed by late June (Tupelo Daily Journal, June 28, 1946, p. 1; New York Times, June 29, 1946, p. 34).



now trying to undermine the white man's rule in the South."<sup>23</sup> Declaring that he was "the man with the guts and intelligence to solve the racial question by sending the Negro back to Africa,"<sup>24</sup> he went on to say, "Of course the nigger is a citizen and you can't make a citizen go some place. I just believe in preparing them a place--and then making them want to go."<sup>25</sup>

Bilbo's campaign speeches did, to be sure, include references to matters other than his stand on the race question. They pointed to his past achievements, his accomplishments during his first term as governor, his important part in the successful filibuster against the Fair Employment Practices Commission, his promotion of federal funds for highways, and the bills he had sponsored to set up research laboratories in which a method was discovered to make the penicillin that had saved so many American lives during World War II. He assured the voters that as long as he was "mayor" of Washington (as chairman of the District Committee), Negroes would not be allowed to take over the capital city. He promised that he would not throw away money on a post-war loan to Britain, who had not even paid her First World War debts; instead, he would

---

<sup>23</sup>Jackson Daily News, May 30, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 18, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Chronicle Star combined with Moss Point Advertiser, June 28, 1946, p. 1.



use the money to give the veterans a three-or-four-dollar bonus for each day spent in the service.<sup>26</sup> He castigated his opponents for "making an 11th hour attempt to create the impression that [he had] started all this agitation about the Negroes voting this summer."<sup>27</sup>

Most of Bilbo's personal attacks were directed against Ross A. Collins who, Bilbo pointed out, had addressed campaign literature to "the Democratic voters" instead of to "the white Democratic voters."<sup>28</sup> He called attention to the striking similarity between the campaign of the CIO-endorsed Jim Folsom, the successful candidate for governor of Alabama, and the campaign of Collins.<sup>29</sup> During Hitler's "heyday," the Senator pointed out, former-Representative Collins had steered an appropriation through Congress to provide \$1,500,000 to help sell Hitler's books in America.<sup>30</sup>

Although the text of most of Bilbo's speeches gives more space to matters other than Negro-voting in Mississippi, the great amount of newspaper space given to reporting his utterances concerning the dangers of Negro participation in the Democratic primary makes it evident that the Mississippi

---

<sup>26</sup>Booneville Banner, April 25, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Hattiesburg American, May 9, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>28</sup>Sunday Post Herald [Vicksburg], June 20, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 19, 1946, Sec. II, p. 8.  
Both used hillbilly bands to draw audiences.

<sup>30</sup>Magnolia Gazette, June 20, 1946, p. 1.

electorate considered this to be one of the key planks of Bilbo's campaign.

.....

Although the other three candidates for the senatorial seat held by Bilbo conducted their campaigns in a style different from his, they left no doubt that they agreed with Bilbo's principle of white supremacy, differing with him only concerning the best means to preserve it. Much of the substance of their campaign speeches was a series of variations on the theme that they believed in white supremacy no less than Bilbo, but that they could better preserve it than he, and could do so without exposing Mississippi to the nation's ridicule.

Collins' campaign manager, Bruce Aultman, set the tone for his canvass when he said, "The people of Mississippi will witness the most amazing campaign in Mississippi's long and colorful history of political battles" and predicted that "the exposures made in this campaign will mean the eternal end of Bilboism in Mississippi."<sup>31</sup> Former-Congressman

---

<sup>31</sup>Delta Democrat Times [Greenville], April 10, 1946, p. 5. Other examples of the tone of Collins' campaign are the following political advertisements:

"Be Present to Hear the Most Amazing Revelation of Any Campaign in the History of Mississippi" (McComb Enterprise Journal, June 12, 1946, p. 4).

"You will be given in clear and unmistakable terms additional exposures of a record of shame and disgrace that you will be called on either to endorse or reject with righteous indignation on July 2nd" (Daily Herald [Biloxi], June 25, 1946, p. 7).

Collins accused Bilbo not only of personal corruption but even of blasphemy. He displayed a check--which he declared was in "flagrant violation of the federal and state statutes"--for \$25,000 from a Mississippi contractor made out to Bilbo.<sup>32</sup> Pressing the charge of corruption still further, he dared Bilbo to make his income tax public and to refute Collins' charge that Bilbo had not paid more than \$72 in income tax from 1913 to 1944.<sup>33</sup> Collins also reminded his audiences that Bilbo had called Christ "a damn Jew."<sup>34</sup>

Collins also cited his opponent's legislative record,

---

<sup>32</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, June 3, 1946, p. 1.

Bilbo claimed that he had used the money to pay for the 1944 senatorial campaign of Wall Doxey, but Doxey claimed to know nothing about the check (Jackson Daily News, July 1, 1946, p. 1).

Later in the campaign when Bilbo implied that Collins had received \$14,000 of the amount, Collins defended himself against the accusation by writing letters to several federal agencies asking them to investigate this check (Meridian Star, June 3, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>33</sup>Daily Herald [Biloxi], July 2, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 7, 1946, p. 3.

The charge originated from a story written by Hodding Carter, who quoted Bilbo as defending himself against charges of racial and religious intolerance by saying that he was "for every damn Jew from Jesus Christ on down." Bilbo denied that he had made the statement, but six Greenville residents made out an affidavit refuting this denial (Clarion Ledger [Jackson], May 30, 1946, p. 3).

Hazel Brannon said of the remark that "after hearing Bilbo's speech at Durant we would say the man just naturally used 'damn' and 'hell' so often in his public and private speech that it was just a slip of the tongue . . ." (Lexington Advertiser, May 30, 1946, p. 3).

which he said proved Bilbo to be "the most useless man in the Senate."<sup>35</sup> He pointed out that Bilbo was absent when the Second World War was declared, as he had been when the selective service system was enacted.<sup>36</sup> He further charged that Bilbo's filibuster against a Fair Employment Practices Commission act had prevented the commission from being killed in June of 1945 rather than at a later date.<sup>37</sup>

Collins also took the offensive against Bilbo on the white supremacy issue, reminding his audience, "My record is a whole lot whiter than his. He talks out of one corner of his mouth in Mississippi and out of the other corner in Washington."<sup>38</sup> As proof, Collins pointed out that Senator Bilbo had appointed a Negro to an \$8,750-a-year job as a public recorder<sup>39</sup>; and although Collins had answered

<sup>35</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 9, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 17, 1946, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], April 28, 1946, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>Hattiesburg American, June 26, 1946, p. 6.

Collins sometimes changed the wording of this claim to the charge that "Bilbo is 'white' when running for office and generally 'black' in Washington where he is mayor" (Daily Herald [Biloxi], July 2, 1946, p. 3).

<sup>39</sup>Oxford Eagle, May 30, 1946, p. 5.

Collins had the following advertisement placed in some Mississippi newspapers: "THIS IS THE NEGRO BILBO APPOINTED RECORDER OF DEEDS (Chancery Clerk) in the city of Washington [followed by a picture of a Negro and his wife]. DON'T LET BILBO FOOL YOU! VOTE FOR ROSS COLLINS. The man who believes in White Supremacy in Washington and Mississippi" (Progressive Idem [Ellisville], June 22, 1946, p. 10).

A Collins supporter from Amite County noted that Bilbo



in the affirmative the letter sent by Bilbo to his opponents asking them to join him in opposing Negro voting, he implied that Bilbo's letter was not sincere because the Senator had opposed the poll tax.<sup>40</sup> The main points of Collins' racial offensive against Bilbo are included in the following advertisement:

It was Bilbo and his gang that secured the passage of a law last session of the [Mississippi] legislature giving 88,000 Negro ex-soldiers in Mississippi the right to vote. Ross Collins was opposed to this legislation, but the political gangsters in Mississippi were too well organized and the dirty work was done.

Bilbo, in his speech on the floor of the Senate on June 27, 1945, undertook to explain why he had before not said one word against it [Fair Employment Practices Commission]. He said that a New York Negro by the name of Philip Randolph had threatened to bring 200,000 organized Negroes and stage a march on Washington and "In those days (June 1940) we were preparing for war, and the President did not want to have such to happen in the city of Washington." In other words, Bilbo remained silent and supported the FEPC because one Negro had threatened a march on Washington, and Bilbo was scared and thought it was best to pacify the Negro who is president

---

claimed that the job of Recorder of Deeds of the city of Washington had always been a Negro job. He, on the contrary, pointed out that a white man had held the job while Woodrow Wilson was President. He also reported that six white girls worked under that Negro (Southern Herald [Liberty], June 22, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>40</sup>Summit Sun, June 27, 1946, p. 1.

It should be noted that Senator Bilbo, in his discussion of the threat of Negroes voting in the July 2 primary, always said something to the effect that "the poll tax has nothing to do with the Negro not voting in this state, the real thorn in their imaginary crown--placed there by the Negro lovers of the North--is Section 244 of the State Constitution . . ." (Jackson Daily News, May 26, 1946, p. 1).

of the Pullman Car Porters' Union. So Bilbo is not against the Negro, he is afraid of the Negro.

Bilbo was not against the Negro when he became "Mayor" of Washington and when all racial barriers were struck down, forcing white girls to use the same toilet facilities used by the Negroes and forcing white stenographers to work under Negro men. Old Tub O Guts Bilbo merely stated: "It's the custom."

Bilbo was not opposed to giving the Negro the right to vote in 1944. Listen to Bilbo speaking on the floor of the Senate (see Congressional Record, 78 Congress 2nd Session page 4414).

"Personally I do not believe in the poll tax. I have been preaching the abolition of the poll tax in my state for five years. I have even taken my political fortune in hand and have gone out and advocated the abolition of the poll tax because I do not believe in it. I AGREE WITH GOVERNOR DEWEY IN THE MATTER, IT OUGHT TO BE ABOLISHED."

. . . Bilbo was not strong for white supremacy when he voted to confirm the six judges of the Supreme Court who recently denied the states the right to segregate the whites and the blacks. And Bilbo knew when he voted to confirm their nominations that they were advocates of political and social equality of the races. In fact Judge Black (the name is very appropriate) all but apologized for being a white man.<sup>41</sup>

Collins' campaign also included a constructive platform. He was for the parity of federal pensions for the aged regardless of the state appropriations; the cutting of G.I. red tape; and the use of mineral rights of federal-owned land for the schools and teachers of the respective states. He reminded the voters, "You need a man who is

---

<sup>41</sup>Booneville Banner, June 20, 1946, p. 3.

on speaking terms with his colleagues."<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, Tom Q. Ellis's campaign for the senatorship was conducted on the premise that he would offer the people of Mississippi a better defense of white supremacy by being better able to oppose effectively such anti-Southern bills as the Fair Employment Practices Commission bill, an anti-poll-tax bill, and an anti-lynching bill, while at the same time representing Mississippi in an "honorable" manner.

Ellis, a State Supreme Court clerk, was an eleventh-hour candidate who was thought to have a good chance of defeating Bilbo.<sup>43</sup> He announced that "he was seeking the office because he felt a majority of the voters were not satisfied with their prospects of representation in the Senate,"<sup>44</sup> and promised the voters, "You will never be called upon to apologize for me publicly or privately, and I will so administer the affairs of my office that I shall

---

<sup>42</sup>Clarion Ledger, June 11, 1946, p. 5. Senator Bilbo's inability to get along with Jim Eastland, the other Mississippi senator, was a well-known fact throughout the state.

<sup>43</sup>New York Times, May 5, 1946, Sec. IV, p. 6.

The following quotation is typical of the feeling that existed when Ellis announced that he was a candidate: "He [Bilbo] had no opposition to speak of unless you consider Collins, Harper, and Levings opposition. Not many folks do.

"Then at the last minute out comes the Opposition (note the capital "O") in the form of Tom Q. Ellis. If there is a second primary, Tom will be in it" (Kemper County Messenger, May 30, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>44</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], May 10, 1946, p. 1.

always be a credit to the great State of Mississippi."<sup>45</sup>

Ellis's response to the issue of Negro-voting in the Mississippi Democratic primary, while different in style, was fundamentally the same as that of Senator Bilbo. On occasion, in a typical address, he told his audience that:

The Southern white man is the best friend the Negro has under the shining sun. He understands him and his problems and is more sincerely interested in their rightful solution than any other influence or agency in the world. Safe and sane and thinking leaders of the Negro race in the South recognize this fact. The Southern white man is gratified at the progress the Negro has made since his emergence from slavery less than a century ago. He admits that injustices have been done, and his attitude is that these problems can be worked out, and are being worked out, by the sane leadership in the ranks of both races.<sup>46</sup>

Ellis warned, however, that there were outsiders who ". . . fill our [Negro] people's minds with empty dreams that can lead only to bloodshed unless stopped." Then he assured his audience that "Mississippi can and will settle its own problems admirably without further outside influence."<sup>47</sup> Later he warned, "If these outsiders continue to fill our people's heads with empty dreams which can

---

<sup>45</sup>Vicksburg Evening Post, June 25, 1946, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>Hattiesburg American, May 25, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], May 29, 1946, p. 1.

Collins, however, was not quite so emphatic at Mount Olive when he said, "Mississippians . . . very much prefer to settle their internal problems themselves" (Mount Olive Tribune, May 31, 1946, p. 4).



never be realized, it can wind up with only one climax-- bloodshed."<sup>48</sup> He subsequently declared that if outsiders "persist in this meddling, they alone must bear the responsibility for what tragedy follows."<sup>49</sup> He further emphasized that:

. . . These propagandizing groups serve only to disturb the waters and intensify the problems by filling the hearts and minds of their [Negro] victims with empty dreams of social equality that can never be realized.<sup>50</sup>

He assured his listeners on June 28, however, that "the Negro leaders of the South are not striving for the social equality which Northern influences and organizations are trying to force upon us."<sup>51</sup>

There was never any question as to where Ellis would stand on "anti-Southern" bills. At first he told

<sup>48</sup>Ruleville Record, June 6, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup>Clarion Ledger, June 25, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, June 28, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., June 28, 1946, p. 1.

There is no little truth in this statement. Percy Greene, one of the main leaders of the Mississippi Progressive Negro Voters League was, and still is, a disciple of Booker T. Washington. The issues of his newspaper, the Jackson Advocate, carried Washington's famous statement, "In all things economic we can be as united as the hand; in all things social we can be as separate as the fingers." The statements that Greene made in favor of Negro suffrage certainly do not show that he wanted the two races to be socially equal.

Ellis, however, did not make too clear a distinction between Negroes desiring social equality and those desiring the right to vote in a Democratic primary.

his listeners:

Where is there, in the name of heaven, a real Southern gentleman who would fail to dedicate every ounce of his energy, every fiber of his being, every influence of his life to preserve those sacred traditions that have made our beloved South the strength of a nation--the hope of civilization.<sup>52</sup>

Later, however, he told his audiences:

I will cooperate with those other eighteen loyal Southern Senators in the presenting of a united front against this unfair measure [Fair Employment Practices Commission] and others like it . . . . The fight against vicious legislation of this type will be strengthened, not weakened, by my election to the Senate.<sup>53</sup>

Ellis answered Senator Bilbo's letter (asking Ellis to join Bilbo in requesting Negroes not to participate in the Democratic primary) by proclaiming his "opposition to the participation of the Negro in 'this white man's government.'" He went on to say that "the Negro, despite amiable progress from slavery less than a century ago, has not yet advanced to the point of participation in

---

<sup>52</sup>Pontotoc Progress, May 16, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 16, 1946, p. 1.

Probably the reason that Ellis said, ". . . cooperate with the other loyal Southern Senators in the presentation of a united front against this unfair measure" was that Bilbo had been accused by both Fredrich Sullens, editor of the Jackson Daily News, and Hodding Carter, editor of the Delta Democrat Times, of staging a filibuster that was against the wishes of the other Southern senators, and one that harmed the filibuster against the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

government affairs."<sup>54</sup>

Ellis's campaign, unlike those of his opponents, dealt very little in personal vindictiveness. The most he would say was that, "If I had been your Senator and had done nothing to solve your problems, I would want to stand here and cuss so loud that you would not see what I had failed to do."<sup>55</sup>

Like Collins, Ellis also presented a constructive platform. He wanted a program of preparedness for the armed forces; the abolition of the "caste system" in the army; federal aid for marketing facilities, for farm-to-market roads, and for veterans; and the exemption of farm homesteads as collateral on federal loans.<sup>56</sup> He also proposed to do something about the federal ownership of land in Mississippi; "We ought," he said, "to give Mississippi back to Mississippians and that's going to be one of my main objects in Washington."<sup>57</sup> After telling his audience that "the bureaucrats and so-called experts in Washington were often mistaken in their predictions," he declared:

The country needs men straight from the people.  
I know the ideals, the wishes, and the traditions

---

<sup>54</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 30, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup>Delta Democrat Times [Greenville], June 9, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 9, 1946, Sec. II, p. 8; Webster's Progress, June 20, 1946, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 7, 1946, p. 6.

of the citizens of my state. I will uphold and promote their wishes and interests in the Senate.<sup>58</sup>

Nelson T. Levings, a naval commander, campaigning on a pledge to bring a new day to Mississippi, characterized the contest as one between a veteran (himself) who had served in the Second World War and "the three prominent draft dodgers of Mississippi politics" who were members of political rings "largely responsible for the fact that our state is fifty years behind the times both from a standpoint of education and opportunities for making a living."<sup>59</sup> The naval commander vowed to extinguish the "Bilbonic plague" that had be-devilled Mississippi for so many years.<sup>60</sup>

Levings, however, took pains to make it clear that the new day did not mean a change in the existing race relations in Mississippi, which, he cautioned, were already being threatened by the blundering of Theodore G. Bilbo. "White supremacy," the naval commander assured the white Mississippi electorate, "is not an issue so far as the people of Mississippi are concerned. We have it and will continue to maintain it in Mississippi."<sup>61</sup> The candidate pointed out that Senator Bilbo had not even been on the

---

<sup>58</sup>Hattiesburg American, June 24, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., June 4, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 1, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup>Sunday Post Herald [Vicksburg], June 9, 1946, p. 18.



floor of the Senate when the Fair Employment Practices Commission bill was introduced. Levings informed his audience that:

. . . Bilbo is responsible for Negro voting in [the Democratic primary of] Mississippi . . . . [because] Bilbo's stooges in the [Mississippi] legislature blocked Speaker Sillers' attempt to enact new primary laws at the last session . . . . Due solely to Bilbo we have the present conditions [Negroes voting in the Democratic primary].<sup>62</sup>

Therefore Bilbo, the man who appointed a Negro to an \$8,750-a-year job in Washington, was "a traitor to Mississippi and white supremacy."<sup>63</sup>

Senator Bilbo, as a result of his scandalous dealings with war contractors, would probably not be seated by his senatorial colleagues even if he were reelected,<sup>64</sup> Levings charged; but his reelection was not probable, he suggested, since a poll taken by Murdock showed that Bilbo would receive only 44 per cent and Levings 34 per cent of the total vote in the first primary.<sup>65</sup> A second primary would, therefore,

---

<sup>62</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 25, 1946, p. 2; Natchez Democrat, June 23, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 25, 1946, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup>Scott County Times, June 27, 1946, p. 2. Typical of most Mississippians' opinion about the poll was the comment of one editor that "We see elsewhere in this issue where our man Levings will be in the run-off with Bilbo, according to a poll taken by Murdock Associates. . . . We don't know Murdock but he must be the same guy that took the poll for the Literary Digest" (News Commercial [Collins], June 28, 1946, p. 1).

be necessary--and there Bilbo would probably be defeated.

"The real issues in this campaign," Levings insisted, "are more progress, prosperity, security, Constitutional government, and the restoration of free enterprise."<sup>66</sup>

The naval commander proposed a three-or-four-dollar bonus to all veterans for each day spent in the service, and he pledged to seek an increase in federal pension money distributed in poor states.<sup>67</sup>

.....

The Sea Coast Echo (Bay St. Louis) took a definite editorial stand against the white supremacy doctrine advocated in the campaign; but the editorial position taken by the great majority of Mississippi newspapers, although often hostile to Bilbo's candidacy, was one that supported the status quo in race relations in Mississippi. A great number of the dailies and weeklies of the state were either openly opposed to the Senator or they remained neutral. Most of the newspapers with the largest circulations were in the group openly hostile to Bilbo.<sup>68</sup>

Those editorials against the Senator may be divided

---

<sup>66</sup> Jackson Daily News, June 9, 1946, Sec. II, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Tupelo Daily Journal, May 1, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> These general statements are based upon this writer's reading of the files of about seventy-five Mississippi newspapers covering the period of April 1-July 15, 1946. Some of the newspapers opposed to Bilbo were the Clarion Ledger, the Jackson Daily News, the Tupelo Daily Journal, and the Delta Democratic Times.

into several categories. One group expressed disapproval of Bilbo's racial utterances. Hazel Brannon complained that Bilbo's remarks certainly did not help race relations in Holmes County where they had always been on a high plane.<sup>69</sup> The Southern Reporter expressed horror at:

. . . the spectacle of a man running for one of the highest offices in the gift of the country ditching almost everything that might justify the consideration of voters and pitching his appeal solely on hate and intolerance.<sup>70</sup>

Hodding Carter declared that:

. . . Senator Bilbo has waged his campaign on the premise that if he could appeal to the fears and prejudices of his fellow Mississippians to the exclusion of all other issues, he could win.<sup>71</sup>

Some Mississippi editors saw sinister reasons as the motivation for Senator Bilbo's use of the race question, and anticipated even more sinister results. The Laurel Leader Call decided that:

. . . The race question, continually and clamorously injected into politics, is a smoke screen. It has a certain importance, but it certainly does not deserve all the hue and cry that it is getting.<sup>72</sup>

The Tupelo Daily Journal discovered that:

. . . Six months ago the Negroes of Mississippi had given no thought to voting in the summer's

---

<sup>69</sup>Lexington Advertiser, June 6, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup>Southern Reporter [Sardis], June 6, 1946, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup>Delta Democrat Times [Greenville], July 1, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup>Laurel Leader Call, June 7, 1946, p. 7.

primaries. The idea would never have entered their heads and the national spotlight would never have been turned on our elections had not Bilbo made such an issue out of the Negro question from every platform in the state.<sup>73</sup>

The Clarion Ledger expressed the view that:

. . . The incumbent Senator Theodore G. Bilbo has stirred an element of voters with a warning of racial troubles; but many observers maintain that the matter was a minor one until Bilbo aired the question all over the state."<sup>74</sup>

Erle Johnson reported that:

Every time Bilbo stands on a rostrum and condemns the Negroes the agitators get together, collect a fund, and send emissaries down into Mississippi to stir up unrest and promote more friction. . . .

There is a race problem, of course, and it is certain to be more acute since the war. But it is a state problem and not one which can be solved or smoothed in Washington by Bilbo shaking a stick at the Negroes and practically daring them to fight back.<sup>75</sup>

Many editors informed the Mississippi electorate that Bilbo was not the great defender of white supremacy that he pretended to be. Hodding Carter informed those who were going to vote for "the little so and so" because he had fought the Fair Employment Practices Commission that the

---

<sup>73</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, June 26, 1946, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 29, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup>Scott County Times, May 30, 1946, p. 4. The thesis of the whole editorial is that Bilbo's provocative statements had been the main cause of the civil rights groups attacking white supremacy--that Senator Bilbo fought these groups but that he was the cause of them.



Southern senators who directed the filibuster against the F.E.P.C. in January of 1946 had sought to keep Bilbo off the floor because he used "heat, venom, filth, and fear" as his weapons in contrast to the use of the filibuster by the other Southern senators to point out the good in the South.<sup>76</sup> Fredrich Sullens told his readers that:

If Bilbo can find a real Southern Democrat in Mississippi who has not vigorously opposed the F.E.P.C. since its very beginning, he will have to search our insane hospitals or the colony for the feeble minded. Furthermore Bilbo badly fumbled his so-called filibuster against the F.E.P.C. and almost caused the Senate to adopt a cloture rule.<sup>77</sup>

Some editors pointed out that Senator Bilbo had exposed the state to great embarrassment. The editor of the Tupelo Daily Journal said that the most embarrassing question that the Mississippi serviceman had to answer in his contacts with men from other sections was "What kind of place is Mississippi? What do her people think? Are most of them really like Bilbo and Rankin?"<sup>78</sup> The Clarion Ledger declared that:

Mississippi's welfare and protection in this critical time require that Mississippi Democrats send to the Senate another such leader . . . for

---

<sup>76</sup> Delta Democrat Times [Greenville], June 16, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Jackson Daily News, June 9, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Tupelo Daily Journal, May 11, 1946, p. 6.

whom they will have no need to apologize publicly or privately.<sup>79</sup>

The Jackson Daily News declared that:

. . . He [Bilbo] has been, during his entire political career, Mississippi's worst advertisement. He has caused our State to be reviled and spoken of with contempt and derision throughout the nation.<sup>80</sup>

The editors also informed the voters that Bilbo did not and could not do an effective job as senator. The Chronicle Star combined with the Moss Point Advertiser said:

. . . He [Bilbo] is actually one of the worst public servants we have ever had in Washington; he has passed almost no legislation in 12 years except piddling bills affecting the city of Washington . . . .<sup>81</sup>

The Tupelo Daily Journal declared:

It has been so long since any Mississippians in this year's race introduced and put through Congress a bill providing major benefits for his state or America that thousands of voters can't even recall such an event. Many of those who now represent us in Congress fail miserably in those qualifications.<sup>82</sup>

Fredrich Sullens asserted that Senator Bilbo's opponents would not be handicapped in their fighting against F.E.P.C. acts by the sort of personal unpopularity that handicapped

---

<sup>79</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], July 25, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup>Jackson Daily News, July 1, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup>Chronicle Star combined with Moss Point Advertiser, June 21, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>82</sup>Tupelo Daily Journal, May 25, 1946, p. 4.

Bilbo among his Senate colleagues.<sup>83</sup> The Clarion Ledger ran an editorial that said, "Too long has Mississippi had only one U.S. senator." This editorial alleged that Bilbo, because of his inability to get along with his fellow senators--especially Jim Eastland--and many fellow Mississippians, had deprived Mississippi of effective representation in the Congress.<sup>84</sup>

Fredrich Sullens waged in his column, "The Low Down on the High Ups," a campaign against Bilbo that in personal vindictiveness approached Bilbo's own campaign. He maintained that:

Any person who labors under the delusion that Theodore G. Bilbo is "the savior of white supremacy" in Mississippi or anywhere else ought to have his or her head examined.<sup>85</sup>

A voting reader wants to know what F.E.P.C. . . . means. Well, in reality they stand for Fair Employment Practices Commission, but as Bilbo seeks to use those letters they mean For Easy-mark Peckerwood Consumption.<sup>86</sup>

We ought to at least be able to show that we know more about democracy and decency than the despised Germans [by defeating Bilbo].<sup>87</sup>

Edgar Harris, editor of the West Point Times Leader, censures Nelson T. Levings for comparing

---

<sup>83</sup>Jackson Daily News, May 15, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 30, 1946, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup>Jackson Daily News, June 30, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., June 9, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., June 2, 1946, p. 1.

Senator Bilbo with Judas Iscariot. "It isn't fair," said Mr. Harris. "Judas isn't here to defend himself."<sup>88</sup>

Some of the newsmen of the state were convinced that Bilbo would not win in the first primary. Oliver Emmerich felt that the opposition was powerful enough to receive sufficient votes to necessitate a second primary.<sup>89</sup> The Clarion Ledger reported that:

As the first primary senatorial campaign moves into its dying hours, it is quite apparent that the opponents of Senator Bilbo have been successful in their effort to force a second primary run-off.<sup>90</sup>

The reasons given for the predictions that Bilbo would win (a prophecy that election results eventually proved to be correct) show, as the individual campaigns of the senatorial candidates show, that the Mississippi electorate was far out of step with the opinion of the rest of the nation concerning the rights of Negroes. The Laurel Leader Call decided that there was little interest in the senatorial campaign of 1946 because "cussing out Bilbo" had been the political stock-in-trade in Mississippi for the past five decades: "It is hardly any novelty to Mississippians," and "about the only thing they [the senatorial candidates] have

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., July 1, 1946, p. 1. One gets the distinct feeling while reading "The Low Down on the High Ups" that the probable result of Sullens' column was to cause people to vote for Bilbo out of resentment at Sullens' nerve.

<sup>89</sup> McComb Enterprise Journal, June 10, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 30, 1946, p. 1.



not agreed on is their own personal value."<sup>91</sup> Mary Cain made the novel prediction that Bilbo was going to win because:

Many anti-Bilbo Mississippians see in him the only force strong enough to hold back the tide of Communism which is sweeping the country largely (at present) through the race question. People who recognize in him the same man who helped Franklin Roosevelt and his New Dealers lay the groundwork for his troubled era see in him the only hope of Mississippi retaining sovereignty, already toppling because of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Supreme Court of injustice. It is in bitterness of soul that they see it--but see it they do.<sup>92</sup>

Mrs. Cain went on to forecast that these people's votes, in addition to the votes of Bilbo's regular followers, would give Senator Bilbo a first-primary election victory.<sup>93</sup> The Clarion Ledger, with the advantage of hindsight, decided that Bilbo had won because he had capitalized heavily on his:

. . . "white supremacy" in the first Democratic primary in which Negroes have voted in any number in this state since Reconstruction days.

He convinced thousands of voters that there was

<sup>91</sup>Laurel Leader Call, June 12, 1946, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup>Summit Sun, June 27, 1946, p. 2. Mary Cain "assured" the Senator this prediction was "NOT wishful thinking on our part. There are few things that we feel alike about, but his method of defending these ideals which meet with the approval of all real Southerners are such as to fill us with shame."

There were many predictions that Bilbo would not win, but in this discussion only the views that correctly explain the reasons for the election results are given.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

something he could do to protect them from the Negro that others of his race could not do--and he deserved their vote because out-of-state writers were attacking him.<sup>94</sup>

Many Mississippi newspapers warned before election day of the probable result of outside interference in the election. The Meridian Star warned, "All sorts of crackpots advise, insult, belittle Mississippi voterdom. Result: We vote against the alien ill instead of for the home GOOD."<sup>95</sup> Life's labeling of Bilbo as "the worst man in the Senate" brought from the Grenada County Weekly the retort:

Life has joined Walter Winchell, Drew Pearson, et al in reelecting our man Bilbo. Mississippians will larrup their own jackass but resent their jackass being beaten by "nawtherners."<sup>96</sup>

In much the same spirit, the editor of the Clarksdale Daily Register and Daily News gave it as his opinion that:

Thousands of Mississippians resent the efforts of the Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, and other magazines to inject themselves into the Mississippi senatorial campaign. They have already elected Bilbo.<sup>97</sup>

The New York Times noted that this belief--that if Bilbo were reelected, it would be because of outside interference--was

---

<sup>94</sup>Clarion Ledger [Jackson], July 3, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup>Meridian Star, June 30, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>96</sup>Grenada County Weekly, March 28, 1946, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup>Clarksdale Daily Register and Daily News, June 27, 1946, p. 4.

"often heard here [in Mississippi]." <sup>98</sup>

Much of the editorial comment on Bilbo's victory showed Mississippi's resentment at Northern attempts to interfere in her "internal affairs." Oliver Emmerich noted that:

. . . Those who lost [backed other candidates] are happy . . . for they have the satisfaction of knowing that Walter Winchell and a lot of his ilk failed to influence Mississippians with their influence from without. <sup>99</sup>

The Commercial Dispatch decided that "his [Bilbo's] name on the ballot provided the vehicle of expression against those who would stir up racial strife and trouble in the state." <sup>100</sup>

Hazel Brannon wrote an open letter to P.M. (which also applied to the Saturday Evening Post, Time, Collier's, and Life) that declared:

When you smear Senator Bilbo and attempt to tell the people of Mississippi to defeat him, you are actually serving as his best advertisement. The louder you cuss him the better it is for him. . . . You are acting as his press agent . . . the best he could have . . . and it does not cost him one red cent.

The people of Mississippi will never permit any outsider to tell them how to vote . . . which is only decent and right. It is none of your business whom we sent to Washington. <sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> New York Times, July 2, 1946, p. 48.

<sup>99</sup> McComb Enterprise Journal, July 3, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Commercial Dispatch [Columbus], July 7, 1946, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Lexington Advertiser, July 4, 1946, p. 1.

.....

In the contest for the Mississippi seats in the United States House of Representatives, the race question-- although all candidates were quick to assure the voters that they were for white supremacy--did not play nearly so vital a role as it did in the senatorial contest. Representative Bill Colmer made much of the point that his position on the Rules Committee of the House made it possible for him to block anti-poll tax, anti-lynching, and Fair Employment Practices Commission bills.<sup>102</sup> His opponent, Grover C. Doggette, countered by asking him to explain why "if he was able to kill the F.E.P.C. Rules Committee, he let the anti-poll tax law come out . . . . Which is more vital to Southern white people," he demanded, "the right of the Negro to draw equal pay or his right to equal voting power?" Doggette also emphasized that Colmer had allowed the F.E.P.C. appropriation bill to come out of the committee three times: in 1943, 1944, and 1945.<sup>103</sup> Both John Bell Williams and his incumbent opponent Dan McGehee promised the voters that they would fight the anti-poll tax, anti-lynching, and F.E.P.C. bills,<sup>104</sup> and both Colmer and Williams addressed

---

<sup>102</sup>Stone County Enterprise, June 27, 1946, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>104</sup>Natchez Democrat, June 29, 1946, p. 1; Clarion Ledger [Jackson], June 30, 1946, p. 10.



appeals to the "Sovereign White Voters."<sup>105</sup> Actually these utterances, with the possible exception of Colmer's claim that he was in a position in Washington to oppose effectively "anti-Southern" bills, did not play an important part in the candidates' platforms.

The one candidate for a seat in the United States House of Representatives who did make the race issue an important part of his campaign was another incumbent, Representative John Rankin. Rankin issued an appeal to Negroes not to attempt to vote in the July 2 Democratic party primary in Mississippi,<sup>106</sup> and he denounced the Fair Employment Practices Commission in newspaper advertisements in these words:

Now let's get back to this infamous F.E.P.C. which these Reds are trying to cram down your throats.

It is the most dangerous and brazen attempt to fasten upon the white people of America the worst system of control by alien or minority racial groups that has been known since the crucifixion.

To sanctify this organization by law would give the lie to everything we have told our American boys they were fighting for. Instead of coming back to liberty, freedom and democracy, they would find themselves sold into this bondage, herded, humiliated, and regimented by alien influences directed by a foreign comintern representing the deadly, poisonous, atheistic doctrine of Karl Marx that is based upon hatred for Christianity and for

---

<sup>105</sup>Picayune Idem, May 23, 1946, Sec. II, p. 1.

<sup>106</sup>Daily Corinthian, June 22, 1946, p. 1.

everything that is based on Christian principles.

The next thing they would try to do would be to get control of our schools, and wipe out our separate school system for whites and blacks, and force their communist henchmen into those schools to teach our children their subversive doctrines.

This is a battle for the survival of the free constitutional government, for the survival of the American way of life, for the survival of free enterprise, for the survival of American Liberty itself; it is a battle to save the white man's civilization.

It is a battle to save America for Americans.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup>Vidette [Iuka], June 27, 1946, p. 4; Tupelo Daily Journal, June 29, 1946, p. 3.

### CHAPTER III

#### PATTERNS OF DISFRANCHISEMENT

The opposition that Mississippi Negroes encountered in their attempt to exercise the rights which Smith v. Allwright had declared them to have was what might have been expected from a white population that was firmly dedicated to the principle that Negroes should not be allowed to participate in the "white man's government."

The decision had come in 1944, but the July 2, 1946, Democratic primary was the first major electoral contest in which the ruling could be effectually applied in Mississippi. It was, moreover, the first balloting of any significance since 1903 in which Negroes had, for all practical purposes, a legal right to vote. Only a few Negroes were registered, had paid their poll taxes, and were therefore eligible to vote in the Democratic primary. The Mississippi legislature had, however, in a patriotic mood, passed unopposed on April 10, 1946, a bill exempting all veterans (who had been in the service when their poll taxes were due) from the necessity, if they were to qualify as voters, of having poll tax receipts for those times.<sup>1</sup> This act had the effect of

---

<sup>1</sup>State of Mississippi, Journal of the House of Representatives, Reg. Sess., January 8-April 10, 1946 (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1946), pp. 808, 1135; State

enfranchising most veterans if they had registered before July. As a result, almost all of the 66,972 Mississippi Negro veterans were theoretically qualified as voters in the Democratic primary of July 2, 1946.<sup>2</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that, since the Negro veterans had been exposed to ideas of social equality in the armed forces, they would be more prone to try to take advantage of the opportunity to vote in a Democratic primary than would those Negroes who had not been exposed to that influence.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of Negroes participating in the Democratic primary in Mississippi was a somewhat novel one. There had been at least some National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) activity in Mississippi since 1918; and Percy Greene, editor of the Jackson Advocate--one of the two Negro newspapers in the state--had been writing editorials since 1940 advocating Negro participation in the electoral process. But all Negroes were well aware

---

of Mississippi, Journal of the Senate, Reg. Sess., January 8-April 10, 1946 (Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1946), p. 811.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearing before the Special Committee to Investigate Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, on S.244, December 2-5, 79th Congress 2d Sess., 1947, p. 231 (hereafter referred to as Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing).

<sup>3</sup>Senator Bilbo, in his campaign speeches and in his book Separation or Mongrelization: Take Your Choice, mentioned the fact that the advocates of social equality were able to indoctrinate the Negro troops with social equality principles despite the watchful Southern senators.



that the white man would consider Negro voting in a Democratic primary a direct threat to white supremacy.<sup>4</sup>

The Mississippi Progressive Voters League was formed less than a year before July, 1946, in order to encourage Negroes to take part in the July 2 Democratic primary.<sup>5</sup> The League held its first state-wide meeting in Jackson on May 16-17, 1946. There the group announced its plans to encourage Negro voting in the primary and to sue officials who put obstacles in their way.<sup>6</sup> The League, through its branches in many different parts of the state and through the editorial pages of the Jackson Advocate--a Negro newspaper with state-wide circulation--found the means to encourage many colored citizens to vote in the July 2 balloting.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Percy Greene, editor of the Jackson Advocate, July 6, 1966. During the investigation Senator Ellender, chairman of the investigating committee, persuaded many Negro witnesses to confirm the fact that there was an established understanding among both the whites and the Negroes that the Democratic primary was supposed to be for whites only, and that this feeling existed irrespective of anything Senator Bilbo did or said.

<sup>5</sup>Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>Laurel Leader Call, May 17, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Jackson Advocate, June 1, 1946, p. 8. This editorial is typical of most of Greene's editorials; it was based on the theme that the United States cannot hope to occupy the position of world leadership that she hopes to occupy, in a world that is rejecting "white supremacy," with the existing conditions in Mississippi. An example of how important Greene claimed Mississippi Negro suffrage was is his statement that "in the simple matter of the Negro right to vote in the State . . . there lies the dynamite with which Mississippi

The result of all of these efforts was that out of a total Negro population of about one and a third million, fewer than fifteen hundred cast ballots in the July 2 Democratic primary.<sup>8</sup> This outcome is impressive, however, when one considers all of the obstacles that the Negroes had to overcome in order to register and to vote. The testimony of almost every witness--both Negro and white--in the Senate investigation of Senator Bilbo's campaign, is filled with illustrations of the overwhelming resistance they encountered. Both white and Negro witnesses unanimously testified that the established tradition in Mississippi was that a Negro was inviting trouble, sometimes violence, if he tried to vote in a Democratic primary.

The Negroes received innumerable warnings from the Democratic candidates, and sometimes from the press, not to attempt to vote; but some of them ignored the threats and nevertheless tried it. Many who tried to register were warned of the dire consequences they were facing. John Hathorn of Louisville, Mississippi, for example, testified that he was told by the circuit clerk of Warren County that

---

and the United States could make democracy the unchallenged idea and ideal of the world" (Jackson Advocate, June 8, 1946, p. 8).

<sup>8</sup>U.S., Bureau of the Census, 1950 United States Census of the Population, Vol. II, Pt. 24, pp. 24-26. This figure was arrived at by rounding off the figure obtained when half of the difference between the 1940 and the 1950 Negro population is added to the 1940 figure; Clarion Ledger [Jackson], July 3, 1946, p. 1.

he "had better not show up to vote" because "anything" could happen.<sup>9</sup> Napoleon B. Lewis, a Negro veteran from McComb, testified that he was told by Sheriff William E. Moore that he was a "hard-headed boy" and that if he kept on insisting upon seeing Holmes, the circuit clerk of Pike County (from whom Lewis had to get a poll tax exemption receipt if he were to vote), he was going to get "knots beat all on [his] head." Then he was warned by the sheriff that a committee had gone around securing the names of all colored veterans who had tried to register, and that the committee was going to do something about it.<sup>10</sup> Ezell Singleton, a Negro veteran of Rankin County, testified that he was told by the circuit clerk at Brandon to go upstairs where a man was handling all veteran registrants. The man upstairs interrogated him to determine who had advised him to register. After Singleton told him he had come of his own accord, the "veterans administrator" got up from behind his desk, started toward him, and then stopped and told him that if he didn't want to get into any serious trouble he had better get out of his office.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing,  
p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 121-22. Sheriff Moore testified that all he did was to give Lewis advice--"as a friend"--not to vote. He also quoted Lewis as saying that he had wanted the poll tax exemption receipt as a souvenir (ibid., p. 196).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 124. The circuit clerk, Dave Gayden, denied that anyone who came to register was ever sent to the second floor; he also denied any knowledge of Singleton (ibid., p. 168).

Joe Parkham, an elderly Negro who had voted before the Democratic primary came into existence, was asked by one white man at the Pike County courthouse, "What kind of flowers do you want?" and he was warned by Sheriff Moore that he would get into serious trouble if he went to vote.<sup>12</sup>

The Reverend S. J. Dickey, a Negro preacher, testified that he had mentioned to Holmes, the circuit clerk of Pike County, that he might give some of the better-class citizens of his race a ride to the courthouse. Dickey later was stopped on Main Street in McComb by a white man who told him that he should not bring Negroes down to register because it was "a little bit too hasty." Dickey was also told by several Negroes that they had heard white people talking about Dickey being a good man but guilty of things that he shouldn't undertake.<sup>13</sup> The town marshall of Magnolia stopped in front of Junius R. Moore's restaurant and told people standing in the street and passersby that they had better not be caught in the courthouse on July 2, adding, "We have always run this town and we expect to keep on running it."<sup>14</sup> When an officer of the Grenada Chapter of the Mississippi Progressive Voters League went to see the Grenada chief of police about whether it was "official for Negroes to go on and qualify themselves to vote," he was told that the Negroes

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 169-70.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 275.



had a legal right to vote, but not to attempt it until notified by the chief of police because "the thing was hot."<sup>15</sup> When Bob Bostick, "the only qualified Negro voter in Grenada County," went to the wrong precinct on election day, he was told that he could vote if he went to the right precinct. On the way to the proper precinct, he met the sheriff, who told him, "I am advising you not to attempt to vote. If you do, you are going to cause trouble, and you will be the only one that will be the cause of it."<sup>16</sup>

Potential Negro voters were sometimes advised by members of their own race not to vote. J. B. Raiford, an elderly Negro resident of a colored community near Tylertown, on his own initiative went to see the sheriff of Walthall County and asked him if the Negroes had been called upon to register. The sheriff told him that, under the present circumstances, he felt it would be best not to register. Raiford then advised the young veterans in his community not to try to vote.<sup>17</sup> J. D. Collins, chairman of District 3 of the Progressive Voters League, was approached by the mayor of Greenwood and by other prominent white citizens and asked to get in touch with the colored registered voters and ask them not to come to the polls to vote. Collins, along with some other Negroes, then advised the thirty-two registered voters of Leflore County

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 322.    <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 328.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

to abstain.<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes tricky methods were used to keep Negroes from the polls. Willie Douglas Brown, a Negro resident of Greenville, was told by the registrar of Washington County in April that it was too late to register.<sup>19</sup> Joe Bell, the owner of a Negro dry-cleaning establishment in Holly Springs, had been paying his poll tax but had not registered. When he asked the woman in the registrar's office about registering, she replied, "You must be talking about registering for sugar." Bell tried to tell her otherwise but she insisted that he was talking about sugar.<sup>20</sup> Willis D. Hamm, another Negro resident of Holly Springs, along with students and faculty members of the Mississippi Industrial College, went to the courthouse to register but was unable to do so because the woman whose duty it was to register them was always "out."<sup>21</sup> Katie Campbell, a Negro resident of Claiborne County, was prevented from voting in the primary because the two poll tax receipts that she had were made out for two different places.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 247. The only contradictions between the testimony of Collins and that of Steele, the mayor of Greenwood, were as to who first suggested contacting the Negroes, whether Senator Bilbo's speeches had been mentioned in the conversation, and the degree of reluctance of the Negroes to accept payment for their efforts (ibid., pp. 261-65).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 77. This did not stop Brown from registering.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

White officials often admitted that they had tried to prevent Negroes from registering and warned them of the hazards of voting. They justified their actions by claiming that they were necessitated by the prevailing attitudes and conditions in their localities. Sheriff William E. Moore answered Senator Bridges' question of how one seventy-nine-year-old Negro could cause a great deal of trouble at the polls with the statement: "You just don't live in the South and know Southern people."<sup>23</sup> Shelby S. Steel of Greenwood told the committee that:

We have an element in all cities that size that is pretty tough, and they were just ready at any moment to start trouble, so our advice to the niggers was to let it alone. I said, "We can't protect you and we don't want you to leave Greenwood. . . . There won't be anybody to stop you from going to the polls and voting, but I say this personally, I can't protect you if there is trouble."<sup>24</sup>

A. D. Saffold, the mayor of Greenwood, explained what it was that the Negro voter could not be protected against:

We have the better class, and then we have what you call the "peckerwood" type, the "redneck," and he is the one that will stir up more in an election day than all the niggers and all of the rest of the white men in the world put together, and he is the one that usually causes the bloodshed, and we have

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 261. The attitude of officials that Negroes could not be protected from violence that originated from their attempting to vote was almost unanimously endorsed in the Senate testimony. Some white officials, in fact, went so far as to say that Negro voters were responsible for the violence that occurred as a result of their attempting to vote.

got a lot of that element there right now because I know, I know every voter in the county.<sup>25</sup>

Mayor Saffold also testified as to why he was not seriously disturbed by the fact that a certain element of the white population was depriving the Negroes of the ballot in the Democratic primary. He answered Chairman Ellender's question concerning why Negroes could not vote in a Democratic primary by saying:

Well, why? They know why. They don't want to. They know the white man is their friend. They know they can't have a colored sheriff. They know they can't have a colored mayor, a colored circuit judge, or any of the county officials. They know they can't do it. They are absolutely dependent on the white man, like the white man is on them. We have got to cooperate, and we have always cooperated there.<sup>26</sup>

After one of the potential Negro voters had overcome his fear of violence, had gone to the courthouse, and had been permitted to take the voter qualification test, he still had to pass it. The test had been devised at the

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 261. This attitude--"We would not do anything to harm the Negro but there are elements in our community that would; so the Negro had better not try anything"--is one that has been very vigorously ridiculed and exposed by Terry Southern. Southern told of the better class of people, two University of Mississippi law students, who warned that James Meredith had better not try to come to the 1962 summer term at "Ole Miss." The law students assured Southern that they would not do anything against Meredith--but "now these heah young unduhgraduates, they're hotheaded" (Terry Southern, "Twirling at Ole Miss," Esquire, CIX [February 1963], p. 103).

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 268.



Constitutional Convention of 1890 for the avowed purpose of disqualifying Negro voters. The examination itself was a literacy test requiring that a person be able to read the Constitution or, if he was not able to do that, be able to explain it when it was read to him. The circuit clerk was the judge as to whether the applicant had passed.<sup>27</sup> Some of the clerks told Negroes outright that they could not and would not allow Negroes to pass. Napoleon B. Lewis was asked the following questions by Wendell R. Holmes, the circuit clerk of Pike County:

. . . Name the President's entire cabinet, and how the President was elected, the attorney general of the State of Mississippi, the secretary of state of the State of Mississippi, who was the sheriff of Pike County, how was the mayor of McComb elected . . . and what was the preamble of the Constitution.

All of these he answered well enough to pass the registration test, but he was not permitted to vote because Holmes refused to accept a photostatic copy of Lewis's honorable discharge certificate, insisting, instead, upon the actual discharge certificate before he would issue Lewis a poll-tax exemption receipt.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>The Mississippi attorney general confirmed the fact that a person did not have to interpret the Mississippi Constitution if he could read it (ibid., p. 176).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 121. Holmes testified that this test had been the practice in Pike County at least since his father's time, which was before 1932. He also testified that he had thought before he had heard the Mississippi attorney

In Greenville Henry A. Myles and some other Negroes were told by the circuit clerk, "Well, I will put my cards on the table . . . because to be perfectly frank with you fellows, we don't want you fellows to register and vote." The circuit clerk then told the group that they would have to answer some questions before they could qualify. Among the questions were these: (1) "What is an ex post facto law?" (2) "In case the state takes over private property, what question is involved?" and (3) "What is an ipso facto law?" Sensing that their cause was hopeless, Myles and his associates left the courthouse. On July 2 they returned and witnessed a white veteran being registered and given his poll-tax exemption receipt without being asked any questions. Myles' group, however, was again confronted with questions, and they again left the courthouse without registering.<sup>29</sup>

C. E. Cocke, the circuit clerk of Washington County, was even more specific to a group headed by Leon Dowdy. The group, which was having trouble finding the circuit clerk, saw him leaving by the back door of the courthouse. When they approached him and discussed the matter of being

---

general's opinion on December 3, 1946, the day he was testifying, that the practice was legal.

It should be pointed out that Lewis said that of the Negroes he knew about, two had passed and two had failed Holmes' test. Holmes claimed that he never failed anyone; he just told them to go home and study their civics (*ibid.*, pp. 191-93).

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

registered, they were told by Cocke that:

. . . The people put him in and he couldn't, wasn't going to stick his neck out and go on and register us, but if we would go see the Democratic executive committee and they said it was all right, that he would go ahead and register us.

When Dowdy's group returned on June 20, they were asked "two or three questions." Then, when Cocke "got tired" of asking questions, he said that it did not matter which way the Negroes answered the questions, that "it would not come up to his satisfaction that we [the Negroes] could quote the Constitution backwards and it would not come up to his satisfaction; that he was being fair." Cocke was asked if everyone was asked those questions, and replied that only Negro veterans were and concluded by asking the veterans to be patient because the time was coming when they would get the vote.<sup>30</sup>

Willie Douglas Brown, a Negro barber of Greenville, was unable to pass a voter's qualification test that included such questions as "What is habeas corpus?" and one concerning slavery in Mississippi. Brown and two other Negro veterans went to the polls on July 2 and saw a white veteran registered, given a poll-tax exemption receipt, and allowed to

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 80. Cocke justified the statement he made to the Negroes that "no matter how they answered, it won't be satisfactory with me" by informing the committee that the statement was made after office hours and that therefore he wasn't acting as an official (ibid., p. 183).

vote. The trio was approached, however, by the circuit clerk, who told them that they would have to answer some questions before he could qualify them. The clerk, after putting some queries to them, cut off the discussion and bluntly exclaimed, "It doesn't matter how you answer the questions; it wouldn't be satisfactory with me."<sup>31</sup>

Benton Simmons, a Negro farmer of Walthall County, who had been registered before, went to the courthouse in Tylertown where he was asked to read and explain certain portions of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890--which he did as best he could--only to be told that he wasn't qualified.<sup>32</sup> Timothy Dillon, another Negro resident of Walthall County, after he had finished reading a section of the Constitution, was told by the circuit clerk, "Well, that don't qualify you."<sup>33</sup>

Clifford R. Field, the circuit clerk of Adams County, testified that he refused to register Negroes because they tried to register without having poll tax receipts. He

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 280. The fact that Simmons had been registered before was not unusual. Before Smith v. Allwright there had been no reason to prevent Negroes from registering. They were legally barred from the Democratic primary, so there was in fact no real election that they could vote in. Once every four years the Negro could go to the polls and cast a vote for the President in a state that had cast its electoral votes for the Democratic nominee for President since 1875, and to do this the Negro had to pay eight dollars in poll taxes.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 281.



concluded that they had declined to pay their poll taxes and therefore would not be qualified to vote, so he saw no reason to clutter up the registration books with their names. Field admitted that he registered white people who did not have poll tax receipts but explained that he knew they would eventually become qualified. He explained, however, that the Negroes never met the franchise requirements before, and that he did not think that they ever would. Field also testified that he thought it was fair for circuit clerks to make it harder for Negroes to register than white people. "We want the primaries white," he said, "and anything that will make it a little bit harder for the colored man to become a voter; that is the way I look at it."<sup>34</sup>

One legal device upon which Mississippi officials depended heavily to prevent the Negro's vote from being cast in a Democratic primary was that of claiming that the Negro was a Republican and therefore not entitled to vote in a Democratic primary. The party regulation stipulated that anyone who had not been in accord with the Democratic party for the preceding two years could not vote in its primary contests. Many white officials took this to mean that Negroes were Republicans and therefore could not vote in a Democratic primary. Senator Bilbo gave an elaborate defense of this position when he declared that:

It has been my contention and the contention of practically all of the Democratic voters of

---

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

Mississippi that no Negro was qualified to vote in a Democratic primary even if qualified to vote in a general election.

My opposition to the Negroes voting in the Democratic primary is based primarily upon Section 3129, Code of Mississippi, 1942, adopted pursuant to Sections 240-253, inclusive, Mississippi Constitution, 1890, which was approved and upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States in the Williams case, which Section 3129 provides, among other things, that any person participating in any party primary whether Democratic, Republican, or Socialist, must first agree to support the candidate declared as the nominee of the party in such primary in the general election to be held in November; and second, no person under this law is permitted to vote in a primary unless he has been in accord with such party in the primary of which he offers to vote for the past two years.

Now, that law is binding on Democrats, Republicans, or Socialists, or whatever party the person happens to belong to.

It has been the general understanding for 56 years in Mississippi that the Negro race has almost without exception throughout all times with the Republican party, and the Negroes who have qualified and registered to vote during the last 56 years have consistently voted the Republican ticket in the general election. There have been in practically every election throughout this long period Republican candidates, sometimes Socialists, on the ballot to be voted in the general election.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 333-34.

The majority report of the investigating committee decided that Bilbo should be seated by accepting the premise that Negroes could be legally barred from participating in a Democratic primary. The report gave its opinion that:

" . . . The Supreme Court decision in the case of Smith v. Allwright does not in itself invalidate Mississippi statutes until they are specifically at issue before the Supreme Court in appropriate proceedings, and that under Section 3129 of the Mississippi Code it was open to Senator Bilbo to maintain, and to the election officials in Mississippi to sustain, this statute by administratively interpreting it to constitute the primary confined to whites. This appears to us to be sound for two reasons: (1) that

This theory was given a less sophisticated defense when Bidwell Adam, former lieutenant governor of Mississippi and past president of the Mississippi Bar Association, said in effect that all Negroes were Republicans by heritage. The investigating committee's counsel, Louis C. Wayman, asked Adam how he could say that Negro veterans who had been away for three or four years were not qualified to participate in a Democratic primary if they said they were, and Adam coolly replied:

Well, I will answer that question as the man did when he was asked the question "Why are you a Republican?" "Well," he says, "my father before

---

the inconsistency and hence improbability to the would-be Negro voter affirming his intentions to support the party's nominee in the case of a party openly advocating white supremacy is apparent; (2) that in the case of established affiliation with the party holding the primary within the two years it is administratively feasible that the burden of proof in that regard be upon the voter, and unless he is able to prove to the election officials that he has been in accord with the party holding the primary within the two preceding years, his vote can be rejected. On this basis we feel that the custom and tradition is entitled to consideration in interpreting the meaning of words used in the statute; and that in light of the custom and tradition showing that election officials had for many years confined the primary to whites, we cannot say that under the law of Mississippi it is not a white primary" (U.S., Congress, Senate, Investigation of Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Report pursuant to S.224, Report No. 1, pp. 11-12).

It is interesting to note that Bilbo's defense attorney, Forrest Jackson, made the following statement in his brief in defense of Senator Bilbo: "No one denies under Smith v. Allwright and other decisions referred to above that the rule now is that one may not be excluded from a primary for the selection of a Senator or a Congressman solely because that person happens to be a Negro" (Forrest B. Jackson, The Case for Senator Bilbo [a reply to the Charles M. LaFollette brief, January 3, 1947], p. 11).

me was a Republican, and my grandfather before him was a Republican." He answered the same question about why he was a Democrat, that his father before him had been a Democrat and his grandfather before his father had been a Democrat. The people down here don't change their politics overnight. The white people down here have been voting the Democratic ticket since the Civil War, and they will keep on voting the Democratic ticket as long as there is a State of Mississippi, and it is born and bred in us, and you are not going to take it out of us. Just as you subscribe to certain sentiments in your State, certain people [sic]. And I want to say this: I think the best colored people in this State absolutely subscribe to the principles set forth by the Republican Party, and they will stay with the Republicans. If you were to have a Republican candidate for Governor of Mississippi tomorrow running, and a Democratic candidate running, 99 per cent of the best type of Negroes in this State would vote the Republican ticket. There isn't any question about that, and they are going to keep on doing it. The reason so many of them have changed here recently and hollered about being Democrats is just because of this dole that the Roosevelt crowd has given them. There is no doubt about that.<sup>36</sup>

Another disfranchising stratagem was illustrated when Samuel J. Lovelady, a shoemaker in Meridian, was told by an election official when Lovelady tried to remove a newspaper that was laid over the ballot box that:

. . . the Democratic primary party has challenged all colored votes and I am instructed by the Democratic primary party to put all colored ballots in an envelope, and you be at the courthouse tomorrow at 9 o'clock.

Lovelady appeared at the courthouse the next morning at nine o'clock, but he found no officials there.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing,  
pp. 361-64.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-69. Lovelady told of the unusual



Quintus Jones, a Negro resident of Jackson, attempting to remove the newspaper covering the ballot box, was told to give the ballot to the lady election official. The woman, instead of placing the ballot in the box as Jones had expected, placed the ballot in a brown envelope without giving him any explanation. Jones then left the voting precinct.<sup>38</sup>

Edward Knott, another Negro resident of Meridian, discovered, when he was ready to cast his ballot, that the ballot box was between an election official's legs. A white man standing behind Knott said, "I challenge that." Knott was then told by a woman election official that his vote had been challenged. After being asked by Knott, "How will I know what he is challenging the vote for?" she told him that he should present himself at the circuit clerk's office the next day at nine o'clock. Knott went to the office at the appointed time, but no election official appeared.<sup>39</sup>

Camille L. Thomas, a Negro veteran of Natchez, was asked whether she had been associated with the Democratic party for the past two years. She replied that she had been a first lieutenant in the army for over three years and had not had much opportunity to participate in political affairs. She was, however, disqualified by the election official because she could not answer the question in the affirmative.<sup>40</sup>

---

incident of a white spectator telling him that what was happening to him was a "damn dirty shame." The white spectator said, "The colored boys have fought in this war just like we white boys."

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

Nathan Hodges, a Negro resident of Meridian, furnished one of the best tests of the theory that Negroes had not been in accord with the party during the preceding two years. When challenged, he explained that he did not think he could be challenged because he had just become twenty-one the previous year and was voting under the G.I. poll-tax exemption law. The election official, however, told Hodges that he had to be affiliated with the party for the two years prior to the election.<sup>41</sup>

The white officials sometimes resorted to brute force to prevent Negroes from voting. C. N. Eiland, a fifty-two-year-old Negro resident of Louisville, was advised by an election official to return to the polls at six o'clock. He returned earlier, however, and told the official, "Gentlemen, you advised me this morning to return at six o'clock to vote, but I understand that the polls close at six, and I came back now to see whether I could vote." The election official replied:

Well, I was trying to let you down easy when I told you to come back at 6 o'clock, but we are not going to let you Negroes vote. . . . We took this country from the Indians and we are not going to allow you all to take it from us.

Eiland reminded the official that his father and he had paid taxes in the county for seventy-five years, that he had never been convicted of a crime, that he had been pastor of a

---

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

church in Louisville for nine years; and that "there is no harm in me." The official replied:

Well, a lot of these Negro soldier boys around here want to vote and we are not going to let them vote. If we let you vote, it would be just as well to let them vote; therefore you can't vote.<sup>42</sup>

In Pass Christian a group of Negro voters were met at the door by the bailiff, Eaton Garriga, and were refused admittance. They reported the matter to Father George T. J. Strype, a Roman Catholic priest, who went to the polling place and asked Garriga why the veterans were being excluded from the primary. Garriga replied that the refusal was the result of a resolution that he had offered in the Democratic Executive Committee board meeting the night before and which the board had passed: that ". . . there was going to be no Negro voting today, or unless the board decides otherwise or unless they paint their faces white. It is a Democratic white primary."<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 149-50. Garriga testified that he had told the Negroes that appeared at the polls (no more than three) that it was a white Democratic primary. He testified also that he had been instructed to do so by the election commissioners. Lester Garriga, one such commissioner, testified that the commissioners had not instructed Eaton Garriga to do so (ibid., pp. 289-302).

Pass Christian became the first Mississippi town to allow Negroes to participate in a Democratic primary, when large numbers of Negroes were allowed to vote in a June 4, 1946, Democratic primary for local offices. Senator Bilbo, however, made the denunciation of large-scale Negro voting one of the main points of his campaign. The Negroes were

Joe Parham (the Negro from McComb who had been threatened when he had gone to the courthouse in Magnolia on July 2 to see if he were registered and also to obtain a poll-tax exemption receipt that was available to all people over sixty-five) was going to his polling booth in East McComb when Emmitt Sauls went out of his way to bump into him. The two men engaged in a pushing contest and were taken to the city courthouse by a police officer stationed at the East McComb precinct. At the courthouse Sauls demanded that the judge do something about Parham. The judge, however, told him, "Well, there ain't nothing I can do about it. He ain't done nothing." Parham did not again attempt to vote.<sup>44</sup>

Dr. William Albert Bender, a Negro minister at Tougaloo College, had no difficulty registering. When he arrived at the polling booth, however, he was called over by a group of white men who asked him to have a talk with them. When Bender told them his name, one of them said, "I

---

prohibited from voting in the June 11 run-off primary because there was some question about their being Republicans (Daily Herald [Biloxi], June 5, 1946, p. 7; June 11, 1946, p. 1).

<sup>44</sup>Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Hearing, pp. 129-32. Sauls told the committee that Parham staggered into him as if he had been drinking. Since there was no liquor odor on Parham's breath, Sauls concluded that Parham had been "daydreaming or something." Sauls testified also that it was only a coincidence that Parham should bump into him near Parham's polling place immediately after Parham had been in Magnolia to obtain the necessary credentials to vote in the East McComb precinct (ibid., pp. 178-79).



thought you were Bender." Bender replied, "Well, why did you think that? Did you know my name was on the voters' list?" The white man replied that he did--and added, "Well, Bender, we are not letting you vote here today." Bender thereupon asked him if he were an officer, and one of the bystanders, speaking for the group, replied, "No, he is not an officer, but we are citizens who are here to see that niggers don't vote today." Bender asked them by what right they could prevent a citizen from voting, and another of the whites said, "Well, this is a Democratic primary, this is a white man's primary, and niggers haven't got any business in a Democratic primary." Despite the exchange with this citizens' committee, Bender continued to advance to the polling booth. An official, whom Dr. Bender took to be the deputy sheriff, leaped out in front of Bender with a pistol in his hand and dared him to enter. Bender talked with him for a few minutes and then left.<sup>45</sup>

Vernado R. Collier and his wife went to their precinct polling place, located in the city hall of Gulfport, during the noon hour of July 2. They asked a police officer who was coming out of the city hall if it was the North Gulfport voting precinct. The policeman said it was and then escorted the couple into the main corridor of the building, saying loudly enough for a dozen white bystanders to hear, "Go right

---

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

down this hall and go through the door that is open there and that is where you vote." Before Collier could start down the hall, one of the group of white men thrust his arms out at him and said, "You people don't vote here today. Come back tomorrow." Before Collier could reply, the group was "all over him." He was beaten up, knocked down, dragged out of the courthouse, and thrown out on the porch. His wife screamed, "Officer, stop them, don't let them beat my husband up," but she, too, was beaten by the assailants. When Collier struck the porch, he was jarred back to consciousness. Realizing that he had lost his hat, he started back for it; but he was prevented by one of the white men, who pulled out a knife and shouted, "Don't come back in here; keep going, Buddy. If you don't, you will never walk out alive."<sup>46</sup>

Richard E. Daniel, another Negro resident of Gulfport, also went to the city hall to vote. He was told by the election official that he was in the wrong place. As he began to leave the building, one of the two poll attendants told him, "Take off your damn hat and don't let me catch you in this building with it on." Daniel removed his hat, but before he could leave he was struck by both officials. After he left the building, he was arrested by Robert L. Williams, a Gulfport policeman, and taken to the courthouse jail where

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 197-99.

Williams "beat him up." Later Daniel found out that he had been charged with being drunk and disorderly. He was eventually tried, found guilty, and fined ten dollars.<sup>47</sup>

Lusta A. Prichard, still another Negro resident of Gulfport, voted without any trouble and, upon meeting his friend J. T. Hall, agreed to ride with Hall to vote. When Hall was prevented from voting by white bystanders, Prichard went to the home of the chief of police to complain about the incident. The chief told him that he would place an older officer at the polls and that it would be possible for Hall to cast his ballot later. Before the pair could return to the polling place, they were stopped by three policemen and arrested on the charge of carrying a concealed weapon. On the way to the jail one policeman attempted to beat Hall with a nightstick. They stayed in the jail for a short time until their lawyer came to see them and offered to get the chief of police to escort Hall to the polls. By this time Hall had had enough. "No, I don't want to go and vote," he said, "because I've got to live here afterwards and I'd rather not vote. All I want to do is to get out of jail and get this thing cleared." When the pair promised not to

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-46. Williams testified that Daniel was "acting crazy" outside the polling place and was swearing in the presence of women. He testified that Daniel had liquor on his breath and that he had to slap him a time or two to make Daniel quiet down so that he could be searched (ibid., p. 236).

return to the polls, they were discharged.<sup>48</sup>

Etoy Fletcher, a Negro veteran of Puckett, went to Brandon to register to vote but failed to pass the voter-qualification test. While he was waiting for the bus back to Puckett, a car filled with white men drove up, and three men got out and forced Fletcher into the car. He was driven about three or four miles from Rankin, taken into the woods, ordered to take off his clothes, and was beaten by the white men--who then drove him back into the town and let him off at a bus stop for Puckett.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 270-73. Prichard testified that they were carrying a gun on the car seat and which was carried for protection while making collections. The gun was not registered, but the police knew of its existence because the chief of police had recovered it for Hall when it had been previously stolen.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-50. Fletcher's story of being beaten appeared in both Mississippi and national newspapers. The Mississippi press was forced to cover the story because Fletcher had gone to New York where he signed affidavits that gave in detail his story of being beaten. The Mississippi press reported the story in such a manner as to make it appear that Fletcher was "just plain lying." The articles usually pointed out that the registrar of Rankin County claimed that he had never seen Fletcher and that Fletcher could not be found for an interview. Undoubtedly, whether Fletcher's story was true or false, articles appearing about a Negro who claimed to have been beaten but who could not get white officials to admit that he had visited the courthouse, served as a warning to Negroes in Mississippi that if they tried to vote they could expect violence and would receive no aid from Mississippi officials. It served warning also that if they reported acts of violence, they might be accused of perjury (Jackson Daily News, June 24, 1946, p. 4).

Fletcher's testimony was refuted by white Mississippians more than any other Negro's testimony in the hearings. The circuit clerk of Rankin County testified that Fletcher had



The testimony of Negroes during the investigation gave ample evidence of the threats of violence they had to face in order to vote. Indirectly, the lack of testimony from certain types of Negroes gives evidence of another kind of intimidation that Negroes had to face if they attempted to take part in a Democratic primary. With a few exceptions, most of the Negroes testifying held jobs as taxi drivers, tradesmen, businessmen, undertakers, farmers, or employees of large national firms--jobs that largely exempted them from the fear of direct economic retaliation from the white community. Most Negroes in Mississippi in 1946, however, held jobs that were directly controlled by the local white communities.

---

never gone to the courthouse; and the chiropodist who had treated Fletcher testified that Fletcher had suffered only minor bruises and that he had told the doctor that some colored men had beaten him up (*ibid.*, pp. 97-99, 164-65).

## CHAPTER IV

### NATIONAL OPINION AND THE MISSISSIPPI PRIMARY

The national reaction to the hostilities that Mississippi Negroes met when they tried to participate in the 1946 Democratic primary was largely influenced by the national feeling concerning Senator Bilbo. Mississippi's senior senator's reputation throughout the nation had never been a good one. The writer of an article for a national magazine found in 1931 that Bilbo's second term as governor of Mississippi had caused:

. . . suspended schools, mud roads, faulty and offensive taxation; a \$6,500,000 deficit for current expenses that threatened closure of schools and eleemosynary institutions; and a deluge of unfavorable national publicity.<sup>1</sup>

The American Mercury said of his second term, "Mr. Bilbo has labored with painstaking diligence and some genius to leave the mental, moral and emotional aspects of Mississippians more confused than he found them."<sup>2</sup>

The unfavorable national publicity about Bilbo increased after he was elected to the United States Senate

---

<sup>1</sup>Hinton Butler, "Bilbo: the Two-edged Sword," North American Review, CCXXXII (1931), pp. 498-99.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh Russell Frazier, "Bilbo: Mississippi's Mouth-piece," American Mercury, CLII (August 1936), p. 424.

in 1936. Newsweek said of his performance in Washington, "Bilbo capped his astounding performance in the Senate with a tacit admission that his whole aim was a stab at Southern publicity."<sup>3</sup> Several years later the same magazine described him as "a veteran rabblouser who once wore red, white, and blue shoes and advocated deporting all Negroes to Africa."<sup>4</sup> Newsweek informed its readers in 1946 that Southern senators had tried unsuccessfully to prevent Bilbo from participating in the filibuster against the Federal Employment Practices Commission because they feared he would destroy the dignity of their talk and thus create sentiment for the measure. The New Republic's reaction to Bilbo's filibuster was that:

There is something ignoble and contaminating in the scene, like listening to a buffoon making nasty jokes. Why doesn't someone get up and answer him, you ask; why doesn't someone redeem the honor of the Senate, of America, by crying out upon him . . . . Bilbo sits down . . . you go out to the men's room and wash your hands.<sup>5</sup>

The effect of this unfavorable national publicity about Senator Bilbo upon Northern feeling toward him can be seen in the numerous demands that he be censured--or even expelled from the United States Senate. James L. Lyons

---

<sup>3</sup>"Bilbo of Mississippi," Newsweek (June 6, 1938), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>"Bilbo the Brook," Newsweek (February 11, 1946), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>"Bilbo on Display," New Republic, CIV (May 6, 1946), p. 648.

called for impeachment proceedings against Senator Bilbo because "he has deliberately insulted thousands of loyal Americans" and made statements "in direct conflict with the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights."<sup>6</sup> The directors of Freedom House urged that the United States Senate censure the Senator "so that all Americans may be assured that the United States disassociates itself from the shameful acts of one of its members," and to remove him if he should "persist in using his high office to undermine the American way of life."<sup>7</sup> The Committee of Catholics for Human Rights informed Bilbo that "a grave disservice to national unity" had been done by his resort to "personal attacks that help feed the flames of bigotry and discriminatory practice in his arguments against the Fair Employment Practices Commission."<sup>8</sup> The Hunter College Anti-Bilbo Committee unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that the Senator "was completely unfit to be a representative of the people of the United States."<sup>9</sup> The Jewish War Veterans asked for Bilbo's impeachment because of the Senator's "use of the floors of Congress to express sentiments which were un-American and intended to divide the country,"<sup>10</sup> and the

---

<sup>6</sup>New York Times, August 1, 1945, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1945, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., August 10, 1945, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., November 3, 1945, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1945, p. 23.



Committee of the Upper West Side (New York) demanded that Bilbo be expelled from the Senate for "conduct unbecoming to a member of Congress."<sup>11</sup> Bilbo was, in addition, a runner-up for the Friends of Democracy's "Ignoble Prize of 1946."<sup>12</sup>

By 1945 Bilbo had such an infamous reputation in the North that many Northern politicians included denunciations of him in their campaign speeches, or identified themselves with attempts to have him expelled from the Senate. Lazarus Joseph, a nominee for the office of controller in New York told his audience, "I hate and despise those bigots, like the nefarious Senator Bilbo of Mississippi, who inject racial and religious prejudice into the affairs of our government."<sup>13</sup> William O'Dwyer, the Democratic and American Labor party nominee for mayor of New York, sent a telegram to the Democratic senators of New York that read, "Regarding the recent utterances of Senator Bilbo, we cannot state too emphatically that we deplore all remarks which insult fellow-Americans and sow the seeds of racial discord."<sup>14</sup> John J. Goldstein, another candidate, declared that he would not allow "Bilboism" to be practiced openly or undercover in

---

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., February 1, 1946, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., May 7, 1946, p. 23. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi was the winner.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., August 17, 1946, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1946, p. 13.

New York if he were elected mayor.<sup>15</sup>

New York Representative Adam Clayton Powell assured a Detroit audience that "the election of Mr. Franksteen [the mayor of Detroit] would guarantee the exclusion of 'Bilboism' in that city."<sup>16</sup> Several senators eulogized Eleanor Roosevelt when Bilbo cast the lone dissenting vote against her appointment as United States delegate to the United Nations Assembly. The eulogies ended with Senator Taylor of Idaho saying that in view of Bilbo's fundamental beliefs, he thought that the Mississippi senator's opposition to the nomination was "a splendid compliment to Mrs. Roosevelt."<sup>17</sup> James Roosevelt, while making a prediction that there would be a clearer distinction between the two different political parties in the future, said:

Perhaps there will be room in the Democratic party for such men as Senator Wayne Morse and Representative Charles M. LaFollette. I would gladly give Bilbo and Rankin to the other side.

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., August 22, 1945, p. 17. The lack of Judge Goldstein's understanding of what the term "Bilboism" meant is shown by his statement that "Bilbo is a product of an outmoded undemocratic electoral system in his state which disfranchises, under the guise of a poll tax, the majority of its citizens because of their color, and vests the voting power in a minority of the state's population.

"Do away with that system and the Bilbos will go away with the poll tax and Americans will no longer have to suffer a Bilbo and these meetings [anti-Bilbo mass meetings] will no longer be necessary" (ibid.).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., October 29, 1945, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., December 21, 1945, p. 1.

Speaking personally, I'd be glad to see them out of public life altogether.<sup>18</sup>

Northern periodicals' coverage of the 1946 Mississippi Democratic primary dwelt primarily on the provocative statements of Senator Bilbo. The national readers read that Bilbo had made such statements as:

. . . I call on every red-blooded white man to use any means to keep the niggers from the polls. If you don't understand what that means, you are just plain dumb.<sup>19</sup>

. . . Mississippi is white. We got the right to keep it that way and I care not what Tom Clark and Hugo Black say. . . . I'm calling on every red-blooded American who believes in the superiority and integrity of the white race to get out and see that no nigger votes. . . . And the best time to do it is the night before.<sup>20</sup>

After the primary, as before, the censure of Bilbo and the calls for his expulsion from the Senate continued. In Los Angeles, Negro leaders attempted to get a million signatures on a petition to outlaw the Ku Klux Klan and to unseat Bilbo.<sup>21</sup> The National Negro Conference declared that the

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., March 1, 1946, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>"Prince of the Peckerwoods," Time (July 1, 1946), p. 23.

<sup>20</sup>Harry Henderson and Sam Shaw, "Bilbo," Collier's (July 6, 1946), p. 30.

<sup>21</sup>New York Times, September 15, 1946, p. 2.

The linking of Bilbo and the Klan was probably a result of Bilbo's appearance on "Meet the Press" in early September of 1946. During this program Senator Bilbo said, "I am a member of the Ku Klux Klan no. 40 called Bilbo,

lynching of four Georgia Negroes was "a direct result of the campaign of race hate and 'white supremacy' carried on by Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi and Governor-elect Eugene Talmadge of Georgia."<sup>22</sup> The Transportation Workers of America and the Jewish War Veterans adopted resolutions calling for the removal of Bilbo and of Representative Rankin from Congress for "un-American" views.<sup>23</sup>

The political denunciations of Bilbo and "Bilboism" increased after the July 2, 1946, Democratic primary. Mayor O'Dwyer of New York warned of the "dangers which lurk in the wake of Bilboism" at an "unseat-Bilbo" dinner.<sup>24</sup> The

---

Bilbo Klan No. 40, Mississippi." He went on to say that he had not been associated with it for years; but he also said, "No man can leave the Klan, he takes an oath not to do that. Once a Klux always a Ku Klux." During the program Senator Bilbo also said that Negroes could not vote because they had not been in harmony with the Democratic party for the past two years. When Bert Andrews asked him how the Negroes could ever qualify to vote, Bilbo answered, "They'll never qualify to vote in the white Democratic primaries in Mississippi; because we are going to abolish the primary under the opinion of the Supreme Court and hold our own party elections so the Supreme Court can't monkey with our business."

The entire transcript of the program appeared in the November, 1946, issue of American Mercury. The editors decided that the inclusion of the entire transcript in the magazine was justified because Bilbo "wrote his own psychograph and did it in such a searching manner that it merits publication in its entirety" ("Senator Bilbo Meets the Press," American Mercury, LXIII [November 1946], pp. 525-34).

<sup>22</sup>New York Times, July 29, 1946, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., September 27, 1946, p. 16; December 2, 1946, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., October 18, 1946, p. 16.



American Labor Party platform demanded the unseating of Bilbo and of Representative John Rankin because they had demonstrated "by incitement to violence against racial minorities their unfitness for public office."<sup>25</sup> The New York State Democratic platform declared, "We denounce Bilbo and Bilboism and will support measures legally to eliminate Bilbo from federal office and influence."<sup>26</sup> Governor Dewey, however, said of the Democratic platform, "They condemn Bilbo, but he is theirs and they can't get rid of him."<sup>27</sup> The governor pledged, "As long as I am governor the Ku Klux Klan or any other group like it will not hold a meeting in the State of New York. There will be no Bilboism here."<sup>28</sup>

By November, 1946, it was certain that Bilbo would, before being seated in the Senate, be investigated on the charge of preventing Negro voters from participating in the Democratic primary. The New York Times declared that "'Bilboism'--a combination of racial hatred, Ku Klux Klanery, intimidation at the polls, and a narrow parochialism to which all national interests are subordinate"--would be on trial. The Times decided that "the hearings [of the Senate Investigating Committee] should be highly instructive to a public

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1946, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., September 5, 1946, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., September 6, 1946, p. 50.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., August 20, 1946, p. 20.

not thoroughly fed up with Bilboism."<sup>29</sup> The hearing itself, however, did not prove that Senator Bilbo was directly responsible for the intimidation of Negro voters, but established only the fact that the intimidation of Negro voters had occurred irrespective of what Senator Bilbo had said or done. Time said of the hearing:

. . . Throughout the whole parade of 96 witnesses--most of them telling a tale of violence, jailing, bribery, or "friendly advice" from white folks . . . only one piece of evidence connected the confident Bilbo with the fact that only 1500 . . . Negroes had voted in July.<sup>30</sup>

The Nation lamented that "it did not have to be proved that Bilbo's inflammatory speeches kept a single Negro away from the polls."<sup>31</sup>

The investigation did accomplish something. It gave the nation a new insight "into what white supremacy and one-party rule really mean." It showed the nation that the adherents of white supremacy in Mississippi would use methods which "any ordinary police court would recognize as intimidation both by threat and violence." It showed the nation that Mississippians would consider themselves legally sound when they reasoned that since "all Negroes" were "potential

---

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., November 18, 1946, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup>"Present Laughter," Time (December 16, 1946), pp. 25-26.

<sup>31</sup>"Of Course We Shall Be Delighted if and . . ." Nation, CLXIII (December 21, 1946), p. 717.

Republicans, they should refrain from exercising their franchise . . . in the Democratic primary, the electoral process in the State of Mississippi."<sup>32</sup>

In effect, the investigation that was intended to put "Bilboism" on trial ended by educating the rest of the nation as to the state of the Negro's political rights in Mississippi--for many of the witnesses for Senator Bilbo willingly admitted that they had intimidated Negroes and prevented them from voting. Such conduct, they explained, was not the result of Senator Bilbo's campaign but a result of the long-standing tradition in Mississippi, a tradition that refused to bow to the edict of the Supreme Court.

---

<sup>32</sup>New York Times, December 10, 1946, p. 30.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Smith v. Allwright thus set in motion a series of chain reactions that eventually ended by forcing the rest of the nation to recognize the tremendous gap between national consensus as to the rights of Negroes on the one hand, and white Mississippians' opinion on the other. Mississippians by 1946 had become very apprehensive about the change in feeling that was going forward in the rest of the nation, for they recognized in the change a threat to familiar patterns of Southern civilization. They fell victim to an almost pathological fear that if the Negro were given political and social rights equal to those of whites, this social change would eventually lead to the amalgamation of the Negro and white races. Then when Mississippi Negroes attempted to invade the Democratic primary--a system that had been contrived to exclude Negroes from effective participation in the state government--Theodore G. Bilbo, a man who had been rebuked by national opinion for advocating ideas that were generally in accord with those of most white Mississippians, found an issue upon which to base his successful senatorial campaign. The campaign, however, gave the Northern section of the United



States, which was already looking for a way to expel Bilbo from the Senate, a concrete charge upon which to try him. But the investigation of Bilbo, instead of proving that he had been the chief instrument of barring Negroes from the 1946 primary, proved only that Mississippi officials, who shared Bilbo's views about Negro rights, had been the real agents of the disfranchisement. The Northern section of the United States was made to realize that the gulf existing between it and Mississippi was not one that could be changed by a court decree, or by unseating a single Mississippi senator--that the gulf was so great that it would take years of education and governmental pressure to give the Negroes of Mississippi the rights to which the Northerners of the United States felt their colored countrymen were entitled.

The investigation, with its subsequent refusal to allow Bilbo to take his Senate seat, also had a tremendous effect on Mississippi Negroes, for it showed them that if they tried to take advantage of rights that the Northern section of the United States said they should have, the North would effectively support them. The doubling of Negro registration in the state in 1947 demonstrated the very considerable influence which this object lesson had upon them.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Earl M. Lewis, "The Negro Voter in Mississippi," Journal of Negro Education, XXVI (Spring 1957), p. 334.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Wilke, Theodore Gilmore. Take Your Choice: Segregation or  
Desegregation. Poplarville, Mississippi: Green House  
Publishing Company, 1947.

Key, Vladimir G. Southern Politics in State and  
Nation. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945.

Kirwan, Albert Dennis. Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi  
Politics, 1876-1925. Lexington, Kentucky: University  
of Kentucky Press, 1951.

Mowry, John A. Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in  
America, 1900-1944. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State  
University Press, 1945.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Shaw, Vernon Lane. Journal of Negro History, 1965-1966,  
Vol. XXVIII of the Journal of Negro History and  
Political Science. Chapel Hill: The University of  
North Carolina Press, 1947.

Woodward, C. Vann. Origins of the New South, 1877-1913.  
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Alabama Segregation Forever," Christian Century, LXXII  
(February 26, 1946), 244.

Sanet, William Rose. "The Phoenix Nest," Saturday Review  
of Literature, LXXII (April 15, 1946), 78-80.

"Wilke's Pillbox," New Republic, LXXII (January 13, 1946),  
3-4.

"Wilke's Marriage," Life, December 16, 1945, pp. 32-33.

"Wilke Is Given the Brush-Off," Life, January 13, 1947,  
pp. 20-21.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

Bilbo, Theodore Gilmore. Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization. Poplarville, Mississippi: Dream House Publishing Company, 1947.

Key, Vladimir Orlando. Southern Politics in State and Nation. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1950.

Kirwan, Albert Dennis. Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925. Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1951.

Newby, Idus A. Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965.

Wharton, Vernon Lane. The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890. Vol. XXVIII of the James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947.

Woodward, C. Vann. Origins of the New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

### B. PERIODICALS

"Alabama Negroes Prepare to Vote," Christian Century, LXIII (February 20, 1946), 244.

Benet, William Rose. "The Phoenix Nest," Saturday Review of Literature, XXVII (April 15, 1944), 78-80.

"Bilbo Filibuster," New Republic, CIX (January 13, 1943), 5-6.

"Bilbo Hearings," Life, December 16, 1946, pp. 32-33.

"Bilbo Is Given the Brush-Off," Life, January 13, 1947, pp. 20-21.

- "Bilbo of Mississippi," Newsweek, June 6, 1938, p. 14.
- "Bilbo on Display," New Republic, CIV (May 6, 1946), 648.
- "Bilbo the Brook," Newsweek, February 11, 1946, pp. 22-23.
- Bilbo, Theodore G. "An African Home for Our Negroes," Living Age, CCCVIII (June 1940), 327-35.
- "Black Justice," Nation, CXL (May 1, 1935), 497.
- "Bayou Croaker," Time, May 6, 1946, p. 21.
- Butler, H. "Bilbo: the Two-Edged Sword," North American Review, CCXXXII (December 1931), 496-503.
- Coffin, Tris. "Bilbo on the Griddle," Nation, CLXIII (December 21, 1946), 718-19.
- "The Court Stands Guard," New Republic, CIX (April 17, 1944), 531.
- "Filibuster," Time, November 23, 1942, p. 22.
- "Foregone Conclusion," New Republic, CXV (December 16, 1946), 792.
- Franklin, John Hope. "'Legal' Disfranchisement of the Negro," Journal of Negro Education, XXVI (Summer 1957), 241-48.
- Fraser, Hugh Russell. "Bilbo: Mississippi's Mouthpiece," American Mercury, XXXVIII (August 1936), 424-32.
- "Georgia's Negro Vote," Nation, CLXII (July 6, 1946), 12-14.
- "The Hair-line Distinction Dividing the . . ." Nation, CLII (June 7, 1941), 655-56.
- "His Honor Speaks," Time, April 3, 1944, p. 21.
- "If Bilbo Is Booted out of the Senate," Nation, CLXIII (December 21, 1946), 717.
- Lewis, Earl M. "The Negro Voter in Mississippi," Journal of Negro Education, XVI (Summer 1957), 329-50.
- Lowell, Stanley H. "Votes for Negroes," Nation, CLVIII (April 22, 1944), 470-72.
- "The Man," Newsweek, February 14, 1944, p. 54.



Marby, William Alexander, "Disfranchisement of the Negro in Mississippi," Journal of Southern History, IV (1938), 318-33.

Marshall, Thurgood. "The Rise and Collapse of the 'White Democratic Primary,'" Journal of Negro Education, XVI (Summer 1957), 249-54.

"Mississippi: Just Two More Times," Time, January 7, 1946, p. 17.

"Mississippi Mud," Newsweek, August 6, 1945, p. 39.

"Mr. Bilbo's Afflatus," Time, May 8, 1939, p. 14.

"Negro Primary Vote Barred," Literary Digest, April 13, 1935, p. 10.

"Negroes and Primaries," Newsweek, April 10, 1944, pp. 29-30.

"Negroes and the Vote," New Republic, CXIII (October 22, 1945), 530-31.

"Negroes as Voters," New Republic, CX (April 17, 1944), 517-19.

"The Negro's Right to Be a Democrat," Literary Digest, March 19, 1927, p. 10.

"Of Course We Shall Be Delighted if and . . ." Nation, CLXIII (December 21, 1946), 717.

"Playing the Clown," Nation, CXLI (September 28, 1946), 341.

"Present Laughter," Time, December 16, 1946, pp. 25-26.

"Prince of the Peckerwoods," Time, July 1, 1946, pp. 22-23.

"Primaries: White Supremacy," Newsweek, July 15, 1946, p. 30.

"Probes: The Man's Future," Newsweek, January 6, 1947, pp. 21-22.

"Racial: Carolina Club," Newsweek, August 26, 1946, pp. 22-23.

"Racial: Once a Ku Klux," Newsweek, August 19, 1946, p. 22.

"Senate: The Bilbo Truce," Newsweek, January 13, 1947, pp. 21-22.

"Senator Bilbo Meets the Press," American Mercury, CXIII (November 1946), 525-34.

"Should Negroes Vote?" New Republic, LXXXII (May 8, 1935), 356-57.

"Southern Drys Raise Negro Vote Specter," Christian Century, LXIII (May 29, 1946), 676-77.

Southern, Terry. "Twirling at Ole Miss," Esquire, CIX (February 1963), 100-103.

Stone, Alfred H. "The Basis of White Political Control in Mississippi," Journal of Mississippi History, VI (1944), 225-29.

"Time Bomb," Time, April 17, 1944, pp. 20-21.

Weeks, O. Douglas. "The White Primary," Mississippi Law Review, VIII (December 1935), 135-53.

"White Primary," Time, July 17, 1944, p. 22.

"White Supremacy?" Newsweek, October 21, 1946, pp. 34-35.

#### C. NEWSPAPERS

##### Mississippi

Belzoni Banner, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Boliver County Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Booneville Banner, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Chronicle Star combined with Moss Point Advertiser, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Clark County Tribune, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Clarksdale Register, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Clarion Ledger [Jackson], April 1-July 15, 1946.

Cleveland News Enterprise, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Columbia Progress, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Commercial Dispatch [Columbus], April 1-July 15, 1946.

Conservative [Carrolton], April 1-July 15, 1946.

Copiah County News, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Daily Corinthian [Corinth], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Daily Herald [Biloxi], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Delta Democrat [Greenville], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Dixie Guide [Gulfport], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Edwards Hummer, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Flora Outlook, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Franklin Advocate, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
George County Times, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Greene County Herald, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Grenada County News, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Grenada County Weekly, April-July, 1946.  
Hattiesburg American, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Hazlehurst Courier, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Hinds County Gazette, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Houston Post, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Jackson Advocate, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Jackson County Times, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Jackson Daily News, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Jasper County News, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Kemper County Messenger, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Kosciusko Star Herald, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Laurel Leader Call, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Lawrence County Press, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Lexington Advertiser, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Lincoln County Times, April 1-July 15, 1946.

Maben Press, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Madison County Herald, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Magee Courier, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Magnolia Gazette, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
McComb Enterprise Journal, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Meridian Star, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Mount Olive Tribune, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Natchez Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Neshoba Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
News Commercial [Collins], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Newton Record, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Okolona Message, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Oxford Eagle, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Pass Christian Tarpoon-Beacon, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Picayune Idem, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Pontotoc Progress, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Prairie News [Okolona], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Prentiss Headlight, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Progress Idem [Ellisville], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Progressive Citizen [Lumberton], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Quitman County Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Richton Dispatch, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Ruleville Record, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Scott County Times, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Sea Coast Echo [Bay St. Louis], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Southern Herald [Liberty], April 1-July 15, 1946.



Southern Reporter [Sardis], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Southern Sentinel [Ripley], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
South Side Reporter [Holly Springs], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Stone County Enterprise, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Sumner Sentinel, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Sunday Post Herald [Vicksburg], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Tate County Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Terry Headlight, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Tunica Times Democrat, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Tupelo Daily Journal, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Vicksburg Evening Post, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Vidette [Iuka], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Webster's Progress [Eupora], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Weekly Democrat [Poplarville], April-July, 1946.  
Wesson Enterprise, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Wilkamite Record [Gloster], April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Winona Times, April 1-July 15, 1946.  
Yazoo Sentinel [Yazoo City], April 1-July 15, 1946.

#### Other

New York Times, January, 1945-December, 1947.

#### D. PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

State of Mississippi. Journal of the House of Representatives. Reg. Sess., January 8-April 10, 1946. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1946.

State of Mississippi. Journal of the Senate. Reg. Sess., January 8-April 10, 1946. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1946.

State of Mississippi. Laws of the State of Mississippi: Appropriations, General Legislation and Resolutions. Reg. Sess., January 8-April 10, 1946. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1946.

State of Mississippi. Mississippi Blue Book: Statistical Register of the State, 1945-1949. Jackson: Hederman Brothers, 1949.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1950 United States Census of the Population, Vol. II, Pt. 24.

U.S. Congress, Senate. Hearing before the Special Committee To Investigate Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, on S. 244, December 2-5. 79th Congress, 2d Sess., 1947.

U.S. Congress, Senate. Investigation of Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, Report pursuant to S. 224. Report No. 1.

#### E. COURT CASES

Grovey v. Townsend, 295 U.S. 45 (1935).

Newberry v. United States, 256 U.S. 232 (1920).

Nixon v. Condon, 286 U.S. 73 (1932).

Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 647 (1944).

United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 299 (1940).

William v. Mississippi, 170 U.S. 213 (1898).

#### F. LEGAL BRIEFS

Jackson, Forrest B. The Case for Senator Bilbo (a reply to the Charles M. LaFollette brief), January 3, 1947.

LaFollette, Charles M. The Case against Bilboism, October 21, 1946.

#### G. UNPUBLISHED MASTERS' THESES

Barnes, James F. "Negro Voting in Mississippi." Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Mississippi, 1954.

Summerlin, Alvin. "Theodore Bilbo: The Last Phase." Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of History, Louisiana State University, 1950.

#### H. INTERVIEW

Interview with Percy Greene, editor of the Jackson Advocate.  
July 6, 1966.